

Educational Philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Forward

It gives me immense pleasure that Dr. Amrit Kaur Raina D/o Late Prof. Harnam Dass, a great scholar of Sikhism in his own right who devoted his whole life to the study of Sikhism is also stepping into his foot steps. She has carved a niche for herself by researching in an unexplored region of the educational philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. We all know that Guru Nanak Dev was a great spiritual teacher who taught the basic elements of learning that teach us how to live worthily in this world. Dr Amrit Kaur delving deep in Guru Nanak's hymns has emphasized that Guru Nanak Dev Ji was a great educationist also. Her first book in this field "Educational Philosophy of the Sikh Gurus" was well received by the scholars. An article from her second book in Punjabi 'Guru Nanak Dev Ji da Sikhia Darshan' fetched her first prize in essay competition organized by Language Department, Punjab in 1992. Another article in English on the educational ideas of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was awarded a second prize of Rs.1000/- in 1969 on the eve of quincentenary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji by Sikh Review. Recently her article 'Vision of Gursikh in Gurbani based on this book has been awarded a second prize in all India Ganda Singh Memorial essay competition organized by Guru Nanak Mission, Patiala in 1997-98. The essay has been published by Guru Nanak Mission Patiala in collaboration with S.G.P.C. Amritsar.

'The Educational Philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji' is a well researched, systematically organized, properly documented and lucidly presented work. The educational ideas of Guru Nanak Dev Ji scattered throughout his Bani have been collected and elaborated in a systematic manner. That shows hard labour done on the part of the writer. The work makes a significant contribution to an understanding of the theory and practice of the educational philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The author is to be congratulated on this solid piece of work.

This is perhaps the first book about Guru Nanak in which the learned scholar has researched upon all the aspects of educational philosophy of Guru Ji viz. conception of education, aims of education, content and method of education, role of teacher, disciple and discipline. The relevance of the educational ideas of the Guru to our own times is brought into focus. Guru Ji stressed not only the all round development of the individual including the physical, mental, moral and spiritual development of his personality but also the social development. Guru Nanak Dev Ji in his famous bani "Patti" has enunciated that education be multi pronged if it is desired to be fruitful. It should be spiritual orientated, unfold the mysteries of cosmos and instill the will to serve the mankind.

After going through the book, the reader feels that Guru Nanak Dev Ji should also be studied as an educationist. This book makes a significant contribution to an understanding of the theory and practice of the educational philosophy of Guru Ji. The writer

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deserves to be congratulated for exploring a new field of education. I am sure this book will prove of great help to the perspective researchers in the allied field.

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PREFACE

This small book has been brought out with a view to meeting the demands of the teachers and students of the colleges of Education who have recently started studying the educational philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev as also to acquainting general readers with the subject. This work is, in fact, based upon the M.Ed. dissertation, "The Educational Philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji" (1969), the All India Competition Essay on Educational Philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, conducted by the Sikh Review, Calcutta on the occasion of Guru's quincentenary (1969) for which the prize of Rs.1000/- was awarded, the Ph.D. thesis on 'The Educational Philosophy of the Sikh Gurus' (1980) and the essay 'Guru Nanak Da Sikhia Darshan', adjudged to be the best in the competition held by the Language Department, Govt. of Punjab in 1992, of the writer. For obvious reasons this book is an introductory work. Nevertheless, all the aspects of the educational thinking of Guru Nanak have been explained in it in a simple form.

The writer believes that the book will serve the purpose for which it is intended. For a detailed study of the subject by advanced students the writer's work, 'The Educational Philosophy of the Sikh Gurus'. Published by the Language Department, Punjab in 1987 and the latest writings of research scholars critically dealing with the educational thought and practice advocated by the Guru can be referred to.

Recently the author has been sanctioned. Major Research Project "Guru Granth Sahib as Vehicle of Mass Education" by UGC, New Delhi. She is working on this project in collaboration with the Department, Guru Granth Sahib studies, Punjabi University, Patiala. This work is a partial fulfillment of her research project also.

Amrit Raina

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Bibliography

INTRODUCTION

Guru Nanak has left a deep impact on Indian life and thought. His message came as a fresh breeze over the then parched land. It is commonly believed that Guru Nanak's message is for all times. His teachings during the last more than five hundred years have been a source of light and inspiration to millions of people.

A versatile genius as Guru Nanak was, he gave deep thought to various problems of human life. Religion, Philosophy, social and political systems, education of man, defence of faith and honour of the nation, all these matters and many others received his serious attention. The views expressed by him and the remedies suggested by him stirred the sick and suffering nation into a new life of thought and action. The subjugation of the people for long had killed their initiative, self-reliance and self-confidence. The class distinctions were sharp and the doors of learning were open to a chosen few. The masses were steeped in ignorance, superstition and inertia. The Guru tried to transform them into a spiritually, morally, socially and physically sturdy people. Education, a very important vehicle of social change, could not thus escape his attention. His educational ideas dispersed throughout his numerous poetical works provide evidence of his immense interest in the life building institution of education. Guru Nanak's emphasis on maximum human perfection, achievable through the grace of the Guru and the individual's self-effort in social context indicates that he might have laid great stores by education of man.

Though not directly, Guru Nanak has expressed his views on various aspects of education. In his writings and discourses. We come across a number of references to the meaning of education, the role of education in human life, the teacher, the content of education, the methodology of education, the duties of the learner, education and society, education and religion, value of discipline in life and so on. But the views of the Guru on education are so scattered in his works that one is apt to believe that he has not propounded any philosophy of education. It is true that a systematic philosophy of education as such was not discussed and developed by him. Surely he did not sit down to theorize as a modern educationist would do, nor did he carry on any experimentation in any laboratory school. Nevertheless, his thoughts on education provide rich material to gauge his philosophy of education. After

going through these educational ideas dispersed in his writings, it is not difficult to piece them together and come to the conclusion that he had definite views on education.

Guru Nanak was the pioneer of a new educational movement. Besides expressing his thoughts on various aspects of education, he took practical steps to spread reading and writing. In the words of Teja Singh, "He enjoined upon his followers to open elementary schools in their villages, so that wherever there was a Sikh temple there was a centre of rudimentary learning for boys and girls. This system has continued upto very recent times and may be seen even now in certain villages. *1

The elementary schools, opened and attached with Dharmshalas during the time of the Guru continued down to the first quarter of the twentieth century. Surveying them during the second half of the last century. Dr. Leitner remarked, "Respect for learning has always been the redeeming feature of the East. To this the Punjab has been no exception. There was not a mosque, a temple, a dharmshala that had not a school attached to it, to which the youth flocked chiefly for religious education. *2

Guru Nanak's contribution to this educational movement was three-fold. Education both religious and ethical in character, was provided in these schools. Secondly, the mother tongue of the people although still not fully developed was used as the medium of instruction. Thirdly, the chief aim of enlightening the minds of the people was to be achieved in discussions and by giving education to children from infancy. *3

Thus reading and writing became common among the followers of the Guru. The new literacy drive spread among the Sikhs and a network of simple informal type of elementary schools sprang up to make education accessible to all. The movement grew and developed during the time of the later Gurus. While the first Guru gave education its new basis, substance and content, the second Guru started literacy movement. The tenth Guru, realizing the need of the time, greatly elaborated the training in defensive and offensive weapons which was first initiated by the sixth Guru. He drew upon classics and enriched both the language and the educational literature. By his time seats of learning at Amritsar, Anandpur, Pointa Sahib and Damdama Sahib came to be established. He sent five Sikhs to learn Sanskrit at Banaras who came to be known as Nirmalas. These Nirmala Sadhus opened 'Deras' at various places in Northern India for the propagation of literacy, Sikh religion and Vedantic literature. The knowledge of three R's as well as skill in warfare henceforth became an essential equipment of a Sikh. The literacy drive of the masses went hand in hand with religious education. Every new 'dharamshala' came to be a centre of

education. Thus educational drive started by the first Guru took a definite shape by the time of the tenth Guru.

Strange as it may seem, it is, nevertheless, a fact that so far few systematic efforts have been made to study the educational ideas and practices of the Guru and to evaluate and bring into limelight his contribution to education. The need for a careful and unbiased study of Guru's thinking on education is obvious.

The present study is an attempt to find out whether Guru Nanak had any specific educational philosophy and if that philosophy is of any purpose to us. Can we really find in his writings adequate material for a coherent theory of education ? Do his ideas have any relevance for us who are witnessing rapid changes in education as a result of the fast changing social economic and political institutions all the world over ?

It is in this spirit of quest that this critical study of the educational thought of Guru Nanak has been undertaken.

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BACKDROP OF GURU NANAK'S THOUGHT

Born in 1469 A.D. at a place known as Talwandi, Guru Nanak as a child showed signs of a saint and a prophet. His face radiated smiles and his eyes were silent and wise. He loved quiet of soul and enjoyed trance of reflective meditation. In his hymns of meditation he talked of God and life. At time he would seat his playmates around himself and ask them to repeat after him the name of God. When alone, he would sit for hours together engrossed in deep meditation. He ate little, slept little and shut himself in some deep thought for days and days together. For many he was an enigma, none could understand him correctly.

Another marked trait of his personality during these early days of his life was his unbounded compassion for the poor and the needy. Whenever a beggar or a needy man called at the door he would run in, take hold of whatever article of food or clothing he could get at and with a beaming and compassionate smile gave it to the poor. Later on, as we are told he made a good bargain of the money his father gave him for trade by feeding the hungry 'sadhus'.

As he grew up, he was sent to school, where he soon picked up elementary knowledge. "Teach me", said he to his teacher, "About the Creator and the wonder of His great world". *1 He left the school feeling dissatisfied and wandered in quest of true knowledge. Having no faith in the rituals, he hankered after reality. Sacrificial thread ceremony was celebrated in Guru Nanak's house to put the sacred thread round his neck. But he said to the priest

Let mercy be the cotton,
contentment the thread, purity the knots
and truth the needed twists . If you have thread
made of these constituents, put that
around my neck. *2

Lost in profound thoughts Nanak started visiting sadhus and faqirs in the neighbouring forests and had thoughtful discussions with them. Beauties of nature attracted him. His soul was attuned to the celestial music vibrating in it. There he transcended the physical nature of the mundane world. For hours he would sit thus enjoying the beauties of nature and an unbroken communion with the Creator of these beauties. Thus he learnt a great deal from his 'undisturbed communion with his own soul and with his creator. The voice that had spoken to many a seer again became vocal in that wilderness and raised Nanak's thoughts to the summit of religious exaltation.' *3

Baffled by the unusual behaviour of their son, Nanak's parents sent for a physician to heal him of his sickness. When the physician put his fingers on the pulse of Nanak, the boy's voice, which had been silent for days came, thrilling with a new and unsurpassed sweetness.

They have called the physician for me:
The poor-doctor feels my pulse:
What can a pulse disclose ?
The pang is in my heart: *4

To divert his attention and to enable him to learn some business, Nanak's father sent him to his sister Nanki in Sultanpur. Shri Jai Ram, the husband of Bibi Nanki, got him appointed in the service of the local governor Daulat Khan Lodhi. He was put in charge of the granary of the governor. To involve him further in worldly life Nanki got her brother married. Although Nanak carried on his house hold duties, his mind was always elsewhere. He would distribute most of his earnings among the poor and the needy.

At Sultanpur Nanak attracted a number of people who joined him in his daily prayers. They would all sing to the tune of Mardana, a rebcock player who by then had become an inseparable companion of Nanak.

Guru Nanak's search for the right knowledge and right way of life that could relieve the suffering people around him, engaged him in long spells of meditation. Once he shut himself in for three days. After he came out, he decided to set out on long journeys, extending over vast territories to convey his message of love, selfless service and honest living. He travelled extensively. During his sojourns, he visited nearly all parts of India and went to Arabia, Iraq, Afganistan, Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim and Ceylon.

Guru Nanak spoke against oppression, exploitation and religious bigotry. He asked 'yogis' to seek their self fulfillment in the service of the people rather than in retirement. To those of them, who wasted away their bodies like Sheikh Brahm in penance, he would say, "starve not thy body, it is the vehicle of the soul. Take care of the body that you may meditate upon the Lord and apply yourself to his service". His inborn mission of uplifting the poor may be manifest from this that he criticized the rich for their tainted earnings and extolled the poor labourers who made their living through the sweat of their brow. He taught 'thugs' to lead honest life and asked the conceited 'faqirs' and 'walis' to shun their vanity and hypocrisy. He criticized the oppressors and exploiters fearlessly.

It would be wrong to assume that Nanak, devoted to serious thinking as he was, always looked serious and grave. He expressed a refined sense of wit and humour and heartily enjoyed innocent pleasure. Once during his wanderings, he came upon a group of happy children playing in a ground of Kirman (Baluchistan). The sight was also alluring for him to resist. He at

once joined the children and began to leap and bound and shout just as the little children were doing. It must have been a sight for gods to see the grey haired prophet jumping and singing in the company of children. What a sense of gay recreation did the Guru possess ! How smilingly he tackled the brahamans in Haridwar and the Mullas in Mecca who objected to his peculiar ways are yet other instances of his disarming wit.

Prayers religious discourses and discussions became a regular feature of the life at Kartarpur. People from all over the country flocked to the place to hear the divine message of Guru Nanak. It is believed that a small school set up by Guru Nanak for the children of Kartarpur received his personal attention. He taught the little ones right upon his last days.

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TIMES OF GURU NANAK

To have the proper perspective of the evolution of the educational philosophy of Guru Nanak, it is very necessary to know the temper of his times and the political, religious, social, economic and cultural conditions of the period in which he lived. Times have got much to do in moulding man's outlook on life. It is in the context of that background that he expounded his philosophy. His "ought", was born out of the then "is".

Political Conditions

Born during the reign of Behlol Lodhi (1450-1488), Guru Nanak grew to manhood in the reign of Sikandar Lodhi (1488-1517).

Sikandar was a bigoted Musalman.
At Narwar, he broke down many Hindu
temples and built mosques in their places.
He entirely ruined the shrines of Mathura. *1

It was by this king that a Brahman, named Boodan was put to death who preached that all religions if sincerely practiced were equally acceptable to God. Guru Nanak was also imprisoned by Sikandar for his liberal teachings. Another saint, Kabir, too, suffered at the hands of this king. The state, under him, assumed a thoroughly theocratic character and he officially imposed Islam on the Hindus. *2

The penal law was excessively severe, the penalties of mutilation and death were usually inflicted on the culprits. Force and torture were employed to extort confession. Corruption prevailed among the officers.

As history tells us there was a great political, religious, cultural turmoil and chaos in India in those times. Writing about his times, Guru Nanak says,

Kings are butchers, cruelty is their knife
sense of duty has taken wings and vanished,
Falsity, prevails like the darkness,
of the darkest night,
The moon of truth is visible no where. *3

The kings have become men eaters,

Their officials behave like dogs,
They lick blood and eat flesh of the people. *4

Sin is the king, Greed the Minister,
Falsehood the mint master,
And lust the deputy to take counsel with,
They sit and confer together,
The blind subjects out of ignorance,
Pay homage like dead men. *5

Seeing this sorry state of affairs, Guru Nanak took to the difficult task of rejuvenating the society. This crusade against tyranny was at its highest at the time of Babar's invasion. Guru Nanak cried in anguish when he saw the people being tortured by Babar and his troopers. He wondered why God did not take pity upon the people who had suffered so immensely at the hands of the cruel invaders. The Guru addresses the Supreme Being in this way.

O God: Thou who are the Lord of us all, didst Thou not feel pain, when there is so much slaughter and lamentation ? I will not mind if two equally strong forces face each other. But when a ravening lion falls upon a herd, the Master should think it his duty to protect the people. Guru Nanak described, the atrocities of Babar in his four songs of Babarwani (the violent rule of Babar). He said Babar had usurped the people's freedom and he was perpetuating untold cruelty upon them. His songs are ablaze with patriotic fervour.

During the Muslim rule, the Hindus had almost no voice in the politics and the administration of the country. They had no political power. Psychologically, we can say that they had become a prey to the instinct of self abasement. Long standing foreign yoke of terror and cruelty had reduced them to extreme servility and they had lost all sense of self-respect and self-confidence in them-selves. Hindu mind had become so very slavish that in all ways of life it yielded to the Muhammadan way of thinking.

In a world overwhelmed by tyranny and reduced to blind submission, Guru Nanak dedicated his life to the service of mankind and preached brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. This message of his, was not an outcome of helplessness and pessimism but a message of hope, courage and optimism. He believed that a happy world could be built on the firm foundations of love, service and truth.

Religious Conditions

During the times of Guru Nanak, the Hindu religion had reached its lowest ebb. It was reduced to farce, mockery and hypocrisy. The priestly classes exploited the masses for their own selfish ends. Rituals and ceremonies had chained the people. Life was viewed with extreme

pessimism and was thus thought to be not worth living. The rigid caste system had led to moral degeneration. The Brahmin, who was quite submissive to his Muslim neighbor was tyrannical against his own sudra brother, for whom he adopted a very dangerous weapon of social exclusion, contempt and hatred.

Writing about the religious conditions of this time, G.C. Narang writes:

The religion was confined to peculiar ways of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observances. The worship of idols, pilgrimages to the Ganges and other sacred places, the observances of certain ceremonies like the martial and funeral rites, the obedience to the mandates of the Brahmans and lavishing charitable gifts upon them, constituted almost the whole of Hinduism as it was then current among the masses. *6

As a majority of people suffered tyrannical treatment at the hands of Muslim rulers on the one hand, and contempt and hatred of the priestly classes on the other hand, it was no wonder, then, that the majority of the lower classes found it far better to join the ranks of the oppressors rather than be spurned by the highborn Hindus and persecuted by the powerful Muhammadans. And those who did not relish such a life of dishonor and had a religious bent of mind and sought safety from persecution and death in the loneliness of the desert or the retirement of the forest and lived in single minded investigation of truth ?

Hindus had no religious freedom at the hands of the Muslim rulers. The conversion under force and oppression tightened the Hindu caste restrictions and this tightening of the caste restrictions, led to further conversions. And thus the vicious circle went on.

Slaughtering of 'infields' gave the Muslim rulers, a peculiar pleasure and they resorted to it frequently. This greatly demoralized the Hindus. With the destruction of thousands of their temples and sacred books, their mode of worship and prayer was almost completely shaken.*7

Guru Nanak was very sad to see what man had made of man. He was sorry to see that Pandit recited scriptures without understanding their meanings.

The yogis split their ears, smeared their bodies with ashes and without any divine knowledge went about wrecking their family life and that of their followers.

"Look at the mockery of religion, That the man eaters are offering their prayers to God, after the Muslim fashion, And the butchers have put on the sacred thread of Hinduism. The Brahmins visit the house of these imperialists, And dance to their tunes for the sake of bread. So they too, get the same relish of life, As their bosses have.* 9

Seeing this sorry state of affairs, he made supreme effort through his own example to show to the people around, both the Hindus and the Muslims what true religion expected of each and every one of them. His songs breathed a new spiritual vitality and inspired a new divine confidence in the common people.

Guru Nanak thus started a mass movement. The common people who had lived for long in spiritual bondage of the Brahamans, women and low caste people who had suffered privations at their hands, found a message of hope in what Guru Nanak taught. He overthrew religious bondage and vindicated the right of the average Hindu to a direct approach to his religion. In the words of D. R.L. Ahuja.

The teachings of Guru Nanak were in fact, a simple stated version of the vedic religion which had its origin in the Punjab but which was lost to the people of the region on account of the spiritual tyranny of the Brahamans on the one hand and the political tyranny of the foreigners on the other. * 10

Thus Guru Nanak pushed back the wave of conversion of Hindus to Muslim religion and showed them the right path of true religion which was very simple and was in their own language. He outshines as the up lifter of the common people. In him we do not find any support for Brahminical ritualism.

Economic Conditions

Writing about the state of society economically during those times, Majumdar says:

“As regards the standard of living of the different classes of the society, the difference between that of the wealthier classes and the peasants was ‘almost antipodal’ while the ruling and official classes rolled in opulence and luxury, the tillers of the soil had very low standards of living.” *11

The imposition of taxation must have weighed heavily on the people. Even the shrines of God were taxed. The condition of the people became miserable in times of famine, when no adequate relief measures were provided.

Corruption was the order of the day. Bribery was quite prevalent, every one offered it and every one accepted it.

The qazi sat in judgment with rosary in his hands,
and after having accepted bribe,
gave judgment against the righteous cause,
When his judgment was questioned,
he quoted scriptures.* 12

Bhai Gurdas states the same fact in his 'waran' that bribery was much in vogue among the qazis. Honours and places were freely bought and sold. *13

Sikandar Lodhi's reign is remarkable for the fact that the Hindus for the first time applied themselves to the study of Persian which was the court language. Hindus began to study it to get into government service and rise in social hierarchy. Even Guru Nanak's father was advised by the headman of the village to ask Guru Nanak to learn Persian so as to qualify himself for the office of accountant. It was due to the knowledge of Persian that he later on got job with the Nawab of Sultanpur. He was critical of learning foreign language on the part of Hindus and wearing foreign dresses.

The Kshatriyas, once proud of their
cultural heritage had abandoned their
noble traditions and even their mother
tongue and were patronizing the language
of the conquerors to get status and good jobs.* 14

This fact is also stated by Greenless Duncan, "Many found it useful, while in their hearts keeping a certain sentimental attachment to their ancestral religion, to conform outwardly with that of the conqueror, adopting Muslim dress, even attending the mosques and repeating the Muslim creed in public, so as to secure immunity from poll tax and persecution alike, and open the door to their own social and financial advancement, for it was impossible for a loyal Hindu to gain worthy employment at that time or to hold offices in the royal court." *15

The society was divided into the rich and the poor. The rich people rolled in wealth, while the lot of the poor was miserable. Guru Nanak writes about the condition of the rich.

Thy mansions are beauteous,
Thy thousand forts are solidly built
Thy hast elephants, horses and their saddles,
And vast host of millions.*16

Guru Nanak was critical of the rich people who exploited the poor to live luxurious lives as is clear from the examples of Malik Bhago, Karoria and Duni Chand and made them to utilize their earnings for the benefit of the needy. His watch word was

They who eat the fruit of their honest
earnings and out of their savings bestow
a little from it, recognize the true path ? *17

There were parasites in the society also in the form of yogis and sadhus. Guru Nanak condemned their way of living and asked them to live like householders and earn their livelihood with the sweat of their brow.

Social And Cultural Conditions

The lives of kings were governed by wine and women. They were addicted to the baser pleasures and their courts became the resort of magicians and dancers. The people also caught the royal malady, which became so wide spread and virulent that even

The holy teachers, quitting colleges,
retired to taverns and presided over
the wine flask, and revered sages
pawned their very garments at the
wine cellars. *18

Harems, full of the wives and
concubines of the sultans and princes
of the royal blood were kept in the
apartments of the royal palace. *19

Guru Nanak condemned the kings vehemently who were lost in romance and pleasure and had lost all sense of duty. *20

It was a common practice with the sultans and the nobles to maintain slaves, male as well as female. The number of royal slaves was usually large. Guru Nanak got himself enslaved at Rohilkhand to put an end to that barbarous practice.

So far as social life was concerned, purdah system was prevalent among the Hindus. Both boys and girls were married at an early age. Sati was also in vogue. Woman did not enjoy respectable position. She was considered to be equal in status to a man's shoe and an object of enjoyment. Even saints like Kabir and Tulsi spoke ill of women. The birth of a girl was looked upon as a curse and among some high caste Rajputs female infanticide was practiced. On the frontiers of the Punjab, there was an open trade in women. Prostitution was rampant and the profession of dancing girls who quenched the thirst of the greedy and lustful eyes was profitable and was patronized by those who should have been the censors of the public morals.
* 21

The Muslim conquest had a tremendous effect in the evolution of Indian culture. Hindu religion received a terrible blow. Hindu monuments were destroyed, their academies were dissolved. Hindu literature received no royal encouragement. To all outward appearances, political

conquest was synonymous with cultural death. The people were so cowed down in spirit that they would pay homage to any one who came to rule over them.

Now the rule of the sheikhas has come,
They call Primal Lord as Allah,
Such is the way of their government,
That they have taxed even the temples of the Hindu gods,
They have adopted the symbols of
ablution pot, the prayer call, the prayer mat.
They have all assumed the Muslim garb,
Even God hath been robed in blue,
Even the language of God has changed,
The people are addressing one another
as Mian, Mian everywhere. *22

At the end we can sum up the conditions of Guru Nanak's times like this:

During the times of Guru Nanak, the country was enveloped in almost impenetrable darkness. Idolatry, hypocrisy on the one hand, oppression and intolerance on the other hand, stalked the length and breadth of the country. Prejudice and corruption of the most revolting type prevailed every where. Morality had suffered a wreck amid surges of extravagant luxuries and sensuality, unbridled dissipation and debauchery had seriously undermined Indian society and character. It is in this background that the genesis of Guru Nanak's educational philosophy lies.

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GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK DEV JI

A great religious teacher, a profound philosopher and an inspired poet, Guru Nanak has deeply inspired Indian life and thought. Actuated by a new vision of life, brotherhood of man, he went about teaching his gospels of devotion to God and Truth, love and service of mankind, to bring about the spiritual, social, political and economic regeneration of his people.

A theory of education is always based on some philosophy of life. So it becomes imperative for us to know the general philosophy of Guru Ji, his conception of God, Name, Nature, Truth, Man and Religion.

Guru Nanak's Conception of God

Guru Nanak's aim of life and that of education is self-realization and self-manifestation. For him the ultimate aim of life is union with God, the ultimate Reality.

Guru Ji's conception of God is given primarily in Japji whose fundamental formula is God is Absolute One, Eternal Reality. Creator of all things. He is without fear and without enmity. He is not subject to time. He is formless. He is immanent in His Creation. He expresses himself through the many, through the infinite plurality of the creation.

Thou Thyself art the tablet, the pen
and the writing on it.
Talk of One alone Nanak, why mention a second ?
Thou Thyself pervades every where. *1

God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, The Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. For countless axons there was no creation. It pleased God and He created the universe. And having created it, He directs its path day and night.

He who created also destroys...
Having destroyed He builds,
And having built He destroys. *2

God is for Nanak, the Sovereign Lord, the wielder of absolute authority, the possessor of unqualified power. He is also Graceful, Merciful, Generous, Benevolent and Kind. He is Father, Mother, Friend and Brother of man.

Thus Guru Nanak does not agree with those thinkers who hold the view that the supreme spirit is a mere witness, a non doer. The creation is a play of 'Maya' or 'Prakriti'. Nanak believes in a personal God, a God of Grace to whom man responds in love, who creates all and abides in all, Who is transcendent but still not aloof. Thus Nanak combines the Aryan idea of immanence with the Semitic idea of transcendence.

According to the Guru, God is both 'Nirguna' and 'Saguna' both Absolute and Conditioned both Unmanifest and Manifest. He, the 'Nirguna' of his own volition became 'Saguna' so that man might know Him, and knowing Him be one with Him.

Thou hast thousands of eyes and
yet Thou hast no eye.
Thou hast thousands of forms and
yet no form.
Thou hast thousands of holy feet and
yet no foot.
Thou hast thousands of fragrances and
yet without fragrance.
I am dazed by such a wonder. *3

God is ineffable. He is incomprehensible, beyond human apprehension, beyond the bounds of man's understanding. But communication between God and man does take place through 'sabad' (the word), 'Nam', (meditation over the Reality of God), 'Guru' (the Divine preceptor) 'Hukam', (the Divine order), 'Sach' (Truth) and 'Nadar' (the Divine Grace). When man meditates over the name of God, with the help of the Guru and lives a creative and truthful life, God's Grace and Hukum enable him to be fully identified with Him.

Guru Nanak's Conception of 'Name'

According to Guru Nanak, he alone is the real educated man, the scholar and the seer who puts the garland of Ram Nam around his neck. 4. For him real education is that which is based on Name values otherwise it will be information of worldliness, a burden. A real educated man is one who evolves the values and graces of Name in his life and cultivates a universal outlook. It is through name that God is realized. True knowledge is a fruit of the practice of Name. Guru Nanak's religion has been called the religion of Name.

For a diseased world the remedy is Name. A body is dead without life and a life is dead without Name. it is the link of the finite soul with its parent Infinite God. It is not mere reflection or meditation over the God's name. it means the moulding of the whole personality through adoption of Name values Truth, Beauty and Goodness in life. Name in short is sympathetic and

aesthetic communication of man with man and environment. In action it takes the form of service, performance of actions dedicated to God and detachment from sense objects.

The aim of human life is, to establish,
name the nectar in the inner mind,
And then express it through creative action.
Surely, it is through the grasp of Name alone.
That a man becomes disinterested in his
outlook of life.
And develops divine incarnation in it. *4

There is no spiritual awakening, no peace, no joy without name meditation. Name is the key that admits man into the kingdom of God, which is within him. It is the Elixir of life without which life will be a fruitless endeavour.

To practice 'Name' means to practice the presence of God, by keeping Him ever in the mind, by singing his praises or developing on His excellences. It is aesthetical insight leading man through appearance to Reality, through word to God.

Guru Nanak uses Name also for God Himself. All creation is also the manifestation of God's name. There is no place devoid of Name. Name is the Sargun God Himself.*5

God is described both, as 'Nirgun' or Absolute and 'Sargun' or personal. Before there was any creation, God lived absolutely in Himself. There was only the Formless One Himself. Creation was not there. When God became 'Sargun' or manifest. He became what is called the Name. Name is the manifestation of God or His attributes, His bounties, His mercies from which we know Him. It is the self of God.* 6

Thus for Guru Nanak Name is the universal energy, cosmic light and ambrosia of life. It is the source of all virtues and beauties. It leads to perfection. It leads to bliss of life. With its help one becomes pure in words, deeds and thoughts and ultimately becomes fully unified with Him.

Guru Nanak's Conception of Truth

The ultimate aim of life and education for Guru Nanak is to establish truth in life and to be one with the True one. In Guru Nanak's poetry there is multiple use of the term 'Sach'. If in one place the term stands for God, at another place it implies to truthfulness or integrity of character. It also refers to the experience or delight of the poet in the contemplation of the Absolute. The regions of creation are designed 'true' the whole Being or Absolute is truly true, values are true, ends of life are true, the Guru is 'true' enlightener for the disciple, the words of the Guru constitute the 'true' speech.

Guru Nanak has constructed his theory of Truth in a masterly fashion. To reach at the ultimate truth, man passes through various regions or stages of realization which are quite psychological. In his Japji we find ascending levels of truth, starting with the physical and ending with the spiritual. In between lie the three stages of intellectual, aesthetic and moral realization of Truth.

First of all Guru Nanak describes Dharam Khand. It consists of the common sense world, the physical cum social environment of man, experienced through the senses. Metaphysically, this level of reality is characterized by 'facts', correlated to human awareness by means of sense perception. Ethically, this constitutes the first stage, that of 'awareness' of the day to day empirical world and the operations going on in it ?

After passing through Dharam Khand man reaches Gyan Khand the realm of knowledge, ignorance is a spiritual bondage. Human mind does not stop at the sensory level or factual belief. It advances further. The result is abundance of knowledge.

In the Domain of knowledge
knowledge abounds,
Myriad kinds of joy there, sights, sounds.*7

After Gyan Khand, comes Saram Khand, the realm of artistic vision or creativity. After knowledge comes the turn of activity. This stage is characterized by beauty and its aesthetic experience. The man's senses are defined here.

Here is inner consciousness moulded,
And reason fashioned,
And mind illumined,
Understanding enlarged,
O, here is the vision of godly trained. *8

After passing through the stage of Sarem Khand, man comes to Karam Khand which has been variously interpreted as the sphere of action or divine grace etc. This is the domain of action, expressed through powers, the powers acquired through reflection and intuitive experiences at earlier stages. He is now endowed with moral strength, the true wisdom which is the hall mark of a valiant spirit. He is blessed with the love and grace of God.

Passing through all these stages, man comes to Sach Khand, the region of the Divine Truth which is the goal, the ultimate end and purpose of human existence, the final consummation of man's ascent to Truth. This is the ultimate climax of the search for Truth. It is the true dwelling place of the Formless one.

In the Domain of Truth,
The Formless abides. *9

The light of Truth shatters all illusions. Perfection is attained in unison with the perfect One.

Guru Nanak's Conception of Reality

For Guru Nanak God is the ultimate Reality. But unlike some Indian Vedantists who consider this transitory world as false and illusory, he considers the world real like the real God. *10. From the root of reality, reality springs. This world is the Abode of True One. The True One dwells in it. *11. Hence there is no question of our being in a dreamland of unreality.

True are Thy worlds, True Thy universes,
True Thy lokas, True the forms Thou creates.
True Thy doings, True all Thy Thoughts,
O Thou True King, True, is all Thy Play. *12

The world we see is the outward manifestation of God. It is the very image of God and we can visualize Him through it. Of course, world is transient but its existence is real. These ideas of Guru Nanak are more in conformity with the modern realists who opine that reality can be found in the world as it is, the world of natural law and order.

For Guru Nanak God pervades his created nature. Seated in nature, He watches with delight what He has created. Nature is His Throne.

In nature we see the Lord,
In Nature we hear his speech,
Nature inspires devotional reveries,
In Nature is the essence of joy and peace.*13

That is why Guru Nanak appreciates God with the fullest dedication who has made nature His very abode and pervades it through and through.

Thus for Guru Nanak God as well as his creation both are real.

Nature of Human Nature

Guru Nanak is a great humanist. For him man is the measure of all things. The human body is the palatial temple of God. He is the very essence of God. Nanak considers man an image of light and asks him to recognize his essence. He is thus idealistic in his conception of man. Man's personality is the noblest work of God. Even the gods crave for this human body. He is the lord of this earth. All other beings are for his service.

What is in the universe is also to
be found in the human body, And he
who seeks will find it.
Such is the divine play of the Creator
that he has reflected the whole cosmos
in the human body. *14

In the body we find the wealth of all the world. *15

Thus man is endowed with great powers. But in him we find the play of opposites. If he controls his evil impulses, his 'Hamuai', attunes himself with God, he becomes a Gurmukh, a God dedicated soul. But if he forgets God and does not control his evil impulses, he degenerates.

For Guru Nanak, the key to understanding of man's nature is an understanding of the human faculty which is called 'man'. Cleanse the 'man' and it becomes a fitting abode for the Name. 'Control it and you will no more wander from the one, with whom you seek union'. But let it retain its impurity let it remain unbridled and the penalty will be death. *16

According to Guru Nanak 'Maya' which has also been created by God, separates man from ultimate reality. The ego of man constitutes the fetters that make him wander in transmigration again and again. But these fetters can be broken with right living, name meditation, service of man kind, divine knowledge and guidance of the true teacher.

Conception of True Religion

Guru Nanak's main aim of education is God realization. Religion is one of the means to achieve that end. That is why he bases his curriculum of education on religion. Hence the need of knowing what true religion of his conception consists of.

Sikh religion is a practical way of life
leading man straight to his goal and does
not involve itself in verbose theorizing. *17

Guru Nanak separates pedantic philosophy from religion and declares it to be a mere gymnastics of the mind. He substitutes 'Kirtan' the singing of God's praises for yoga as a means of linking the soul of man with God. He is against mechanical worship, rituals and ceremonies. Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a yogi's staff, or in ashes smeared over the body:

Abide pure amid the impurities of the world,
Thus shall thou find the way of religion. *18

True religion for him is to be found not in external practices, but in the inward discipline of love, faith, mercy and humility expressed in righteous and compassionate deeds and in the upholding of all that is true.

Make mercy your mosque,
Faith your prayer mat,
And righteousness your quaran,
Make humility your circumcision,
Uprightness your fasting,
And so you will be a true Muslim.
Make good works your Kabah,
Truth your Pir,
And compassion your creed
And your prayer,
Make the performance of what pleases (God) your rosary,
And, Nanak, He will uphold your honour. *19

‘Deeds not creeds’ is what he asks of his disciples, ‘God will not ask man’, said Nanak ‘of what race and religion he is’. He will but ask him, ‘what have you done ?’. Thus he emphasizes work and service. Work is worship. It is through service of mankind that man can get recognition from God. Service of man is service of God.

To practice devotional service
of God in the world.
Is to get a seat of honour in
His kingdom.*20

Guru Nanak’s religion is a practical religion. Truth is high but higher still is truthful living. 21

There can be no worship without good actions. His religion consists in love, service, purity, justice, goodness and righteousness. It is a discipline of life.

There is one universal religion in the whole world,
And that is the establishment of Truth in life
But rare is the man who achieves this aim. *22

The three cardinal principles of Guru Nanak’s religion are ‘Kirat Karna’ (to earn one’s living by honest labour) ‘Vandah Chakana’ (to share one’s earnings with the poor) and ‘Nam Japna’ (to meditate on the name of God) and it is with the help of these three principles that socialistic pattern of society can be established.

Immoral conduct can never be a feature of spiritual religion.

Guru Nanak considers the following cardinal virtues to be essential for the religion discipline of a Sikh:

1. Sat, Santokh, Vichar, that is Truth, Contentment and Reflection.
2. Daya, Dharam, Dan, that is compassion, Righteousness and charity.
3. Sidak, Sabar, Sanjam, that is Faith, Tolerance and Restraint.
4. Khima, Garibi, Seva, that is Forgiveness, Humility and Service.
5. Bhau, Gyan, Kirt, Love, Knowledge and Work.*23

In Guru Nanak's religion there is no discrimination of caste and creed. For him Hindus and Muslims are equal. He meets man as a man with highly evolved social sense. He sees God in man and respects him with all humility and reverence. He openly says:

All men are great, none of them is low,
There is one light of Absolute God alone which pervades
All the three cosmic regions of Body, Mind and Soul brimfully.*24

These ideas of the Guru provide a base to his educational thinking. In the pages that follow we find a close relationship between his general philosophy and educational ideas.

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CONCEPTION AND AIMS OF EDUCATION

Guru Nanak had a versatile mind. He dealt with all phases of life elaborately. He wrote profusely on religion, philosophy, moral and social ethics, education, social welfare, economic and political evils of his time, etc.

In his writings and discussions, Guru Ji has frequently referred to the role of education in human life, although his views are scattered in his works and one is apt to believe that he has not propounded any philosophy of education. It is true that a systematic philosophy of education as such was not developed by him. He did not sit down to write a treatise on education nor did he carry on any experimentation in any laboratory school. Nevertheless, his thoughts on education dispersed in his writings provide rich material on the philosophy of education. After going through his educational ideas lying here and there in his works especially in Japji, Patti, Asa di war and Onkar, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that he had definite views on education. All through his thoughts on education, one finds intimate relation between his educational views and general philosophy.

Guru Nanak's conception of education is not one sided. It encompasses the entire vista of man's life on earth. The highest education, according to him is that which develops the whole man in a way that he realizes God's existence and gets in tune with Him. He says:

That teacher alone is educated.
Who enlightens his mind with divine knowledge,
Through right reflection in a spontaneous way,
Who sublimates his education into right understanding of life,
And cultivates devotional love for Ram Nam.*1

From times immemorial India has been a land of spiritual consciousness. The ancient Indian educationists, believed that education enabled a student to realize his spiritual nature, 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached' is the essence of the teachings of Upanishadas. In Guru Nanak's conception of education we find the same noble ideal. One who realizes himself is a truly educated man:

Nanak says in all humility,
That he alone is the man of wisdom,
who gains self knowledge,
And attains the realization of God,
That seer alone becomes acceptable in the court of God,
Who evolves Name enlightenment in his life,
Through the grace of the Guru.*2

According to Guru Nanak true education should enable a man to attain self realization. He says emphatically that a really educated man is one who enlightens his mind with the divine knowledge and realizes himself. He has emphasized this idea again and again.

An educated person, a scholar or a seer is one
Who puts the garland of Ram Nam round his neck.*3

The garland of Ram Nam stands for the adoption of the cosmic values of knowledge, love, beauty, purity, sportsmanship, humour and universality, Ram stands for all pervading universal spirit and Nam for Name which is the very embodiment of truth, life, joy, beauty, purity, righteousness and heroism. Truly, Ram Nam is the special word which the Guru has associated with education. Thus to wear the garland of Ram Nam, to be a really educated person is not an easy task. One must lead a noble and disciplined life and then alone one can evolve such high values in life. But once one has inculcated such high ideals in life, one becomes acceptable in the court of lord. *4

A rightly educated person whose soul and mind,
Are awakened into the realm of self realization,
Becomes acceptable in the court of God,
surely, there flies the flag of God's
Kingdom over his head.*5

That is why some people sing the praises of God through gaining knowledge which is based on wisdom and enlightenment. *6

Self Realization

The ultimate end of education is determined by the ultimate goal of life which has always constituted the highest aspiration of man. The people of lore regarded the aspiration for the 'Bhuma'. Infinite Plenty' as the highest aspiration of man.

Influenced by such a philosophy, Guru Nanak regards, self realization and self manifestation as the ultimate aims of education on which the upliftment of man depends.

He is a man of wisdom who gains
self knowledge through self enlightenment. *7

Guru Nanak has used two special words, 'Vigas' and 'Pargas' for the evolution of man's life. 'Vigas' means evolution of divine beauties in life and 'Pargas' signifies manifestation of divine enlightenment through life. A man can gain honour of life only if he develops divine consciousness in him. And true teacher is he who awakens divine consciousness in his disciples.

He alone is a really educated teacher,
Who is God centered or Gurmukh,
Who awakens divine intelligence in his disciples,
Who meditates divine name with concentration,
Who stores name in his mind,
Who gains the gain of God realization,
Which is the main purpose of human life. *8

That is why he asks the Pandit, the scholar to write the praises of God.

O, Pandit, why writest thou of strife and involvement,
Pray, write thou, only the God's name, by the Guru's grace. *9

Guru Nanak decries that education which stimulates the mind without giving inner satisfaction.
Real education should help in spiritual experience.

“What use is that education”, says Guru
Nanak “which does not help us to get out
of our animal existence, and which does not
awaken the spiritual depths in man
but on the other hand sharpens his
intellect to become clever, selfish, sly and wicked.” *10

Thus like the ancient Indian teacher, Guru Nanak believes that education is that which liberates.
Even in the modern times, Vivekanand and Gandhi have upheld this aim of education.
According to Tagore, too, to know the infinite, to attain the ‘Bhuma’ is the highest aim of
human life. *11

Book Learning is not Synonymous With Education

Guru Nanak differentiates education from mere information. One may read innumerable books
and still may not be a rightly educated person. Once Guru Nanak, met an eminent Kashmiri
Pandit, Dharam Dass by name. He came to Guru Nanak also for the sake of scholarly
discussions. Guru Nanak explained to him that the store of information or knowledge did not
constitute real education.

We may read and read books.
And fill carts with their loads,
We may read and read books,
And store caravans upon caravans with their loads,
We may read and read books,
Throughout the life and for all the breaths at our disposal.

Yet says Nanak,
That all our education will be a mere prattle of ego,
unless we realize the philosophy of unity of Godhead through it,
To make our destiny divine.*12

Thus to Guru Nanak, mere book learning is not education. God is the Summum bonum of human life. In fact, that alone is the real education which enables a person to realize the divinity latent in him.

He alone is a man of wisdom,
Who gains self knowledge
through right reflection. *13

Guru Nanak does not want to live by amassing knowledge which is merely an external stuff. He wants to conquer death through an education which will generate immortalizing nectar within the soul. He condemns the scholars of his times who were contented only with the mass of knowledge they acquired for fruitless discussions, but did not realize the actual aim of life.

The scholars study more and more to gain knowledge,
But they use it for vain discussions,
They do not use education,
For the realization of divine substance, which is in them.*14

Guru Nanak is of the opinion that if one goes on reading and reading for its own sake without practical realization of knowledge, he worries himself more and more.

The more you write and study without
practical realization of wisdom,
The more you worry yourself. *15

Education As Illumination

From the vedic age onwards the central conception of education of the Indians has been that it is a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the various spheres of life. Knowledge is rightly called the third eye of man, which gives him insight into all affairs of life and teaches him to act correctly. Nothing gives us such an insight as education, says the Mahabharata. *16 Ignorance is the real bondage of man. Gyan is the Guru which removes this ignorance.

A – Knowledge Is Strength

Guru Nanak considers education essential for the enlightenment of body, mind and soul. It is avidya *17 (ignorance) he says, which forges fetters to bind the mind. Education

enlightens the mind with the light of knowledge. As with the appearance of the sun, the moon disappears, so with the attainment of knowledge ignorance is dispelled. *18 The lamp of wisdom burns steadily when it is fed by the oil of the essence of knowledge. Writing about the masses of his own times he says,

The people live in utter ignorance,
Like dead souls they obey the despots. *19
Those people who are devoid of knowledge,
Fall an easy victim to deception of life,
And are eaten up by the God of death.*20

Education illumines the mind and helps in loosening the hold of these fetters.

B – Knowledge Leads To Wisdom And Insight

Guru Ji regards knowledge as collerium when applied adds to the vigour and sight of eyes. Just as the darkness disappears, when the lamp is lighted, similarly through the study of books of wisdom, ignorance of our mind is removed. It becomes clean and does not get dirty again:

One can cleanse the mind (only) with the jewel of wisdom,
And thereafter, it is soiled not again. *21

C – Knowledge Elevates Body, Mind And Soul

For Guru Nanak knowledge helps in the harmonious development of body, mind and soul. Cultivation of the intellect is the most important factor in developing a fully integrated personality.

When we acquire treasure of divine knowledge,
We get insight into all the three realms of body, mind and soul. *22

D – Knowledge Is Virtue

With the help of knowledge man is able to discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong. He shuns evil and follows the virtuous path. He is able to fight the evil impulses of his mind with the sword of knowledge:

Man's desires subside in his mind,
When he fights against them,
With the sword of wisdom.*23

E – Wisdom Leads To Spiritual Consciousness

For Guru Ji constant curiosity and alertness of the mind and the emancipation of the intellect from inertia and dead habits should constitute a real element in the intellectual make-up of an individual as he is aware of the utility of knowledge for spiritual upliftment also. But by knowledge he means divine knowledge which helps to gain eternal bliss.

The man of wisdom, gains eternal life of spiritualism,
Because he develops divine consciousness in himself. * 24

Education as unfolding of Potentialities.

Man is endowed with great potentialities and capacities. Modern educationists regard education as the development of inborn powers. "True education," said Rousseau "is something that happens from within the individual. It is unfolding of his latent powers." *25 In this process of development, the child is helped and guided by the teacher. Education is considered a bi-polar, a designed and deliberate process of direction intended on the part of the teacher to influence personal growth and learning of the pupil. "Education is the process whereby persons intentionally guide the development of persons." *26

Guru Nanak believes that man is blessed with unlimited powers. Education is the process of making this inner outer with the help of the Guru. " In the mine of the human soul there are so many gems and jewels of faculties waiting for development only if one cares to listen to the voice of the teacher." * 27

But these precious pearls of knowledge can be discovered with the help of the teacher. He believes that education is the development of latent faculties of the child with the help of the teacher. It makes his education a bi-polar process.

Formation of Character And Infusion of Piety

Guru Ji is of opinion that true education refines and strengthens our moral fiber and thus prevents us being affected by the way-ward fleeting passions and prejudices. Otherwise, it is far better to be an unlearned saint than to be a wicked, haughty, selfish, and self willed scholar. It is better to be an ignorant virtuous man than to be a learned sinner.

A scholar sinner will not be spared,
An unlettered saint will not be ensnared,
A man will by his actions and deeds,
Be judged and known good and bad to be,
Play not the game of life in such a way,
That in His presence you may find no place,

The scholar as well as the unlettered soul,
By their deeds will be judged in his court,
The self-willed and braggadocio,
will suffer agonizing blows.* 28

Guru Nanak emphasizes cultivation of Name character that is based on evolution of name in life. He also calls it 'Sabad Achar' or character based on enlightenment of Dharma, Ratan Achar, character, which is a gem of divinity, 'Sach Achar', character based on truthful living and 'Chaj Achar' character based on the spiritual art of life.

As a moral teacher Guru Ji emphasizes the inculcation of higher values in life again and again. For him Divine knowledge can be obtained through the practical evolution of higher virtues alone. And these virtues as our friends help us to overcome vices.

Nanak: as many are the vices, so many
are the chains round one's neck,
Yea, one removes vice with virtue
for virtue is our only friend. *30

In his Japji he tells us how a good personality can be developed.

In the forge of complete purity,
The goldsmith of patience and perseverance,
Should set himself up, with Anvil of inner light
Hammer of divine wisdom,
Bellows of divine discipline
Fire of austerity and optimism,
And the melting pot of love,
And cast the gold of Name contemplation,
which is nectar.
Into the ornamental mould of divine life,
Surely the ornament of sabad character,
Is shaped in the mint of true personality alone,
Verily human destiny is fashioned into divine spiritualism,
By those alone, who follow the path of grace and action.
Certainly, O Nanak, when the grace of all Graceful God,
Falls on One,
One gets the fullest bloom and colour of life. *31

According to Guru Nanak the mark of an educated person is that he contemplates over the higher values of life and indicates them in his life.

He alone is a wise man,
Who gains practical enlightenment of life,
Through meditation, over the divine virtues.*32

Even if a person has read a huge number of books and acquired degrees, is not an educated person if he suffers from selfishness, greed and ego.

An educated person is a fool.
If he indulges in ego, greed and lust.* 33

He lays great emphasis on the need to overcome evil impulses and vices like 'Kam' (concupiscence) 'Karodh' (anger) 'Lobh' (covetousness) 'Moh' (attachment) 'Ahnkar' (pride). These passions are to be sublimated by virtues as the springs of action rather than physical torture or recourse to asceticism.

Cultural, Emotional And Aesthetic Development

Guru Nanak is alive to the education and enrichment of emotions. For cultural, emotional and aesthetic development he emphasizes the traditional study of music and literature. He emphasizes the singing of God's praises accompanied with music. Music is the soul of life and it is the soul of Sikh religion. This tradition of singing God's praises is still found in Gurudwaras.

Guru Nanak was a great poet and his poetry has a musical basis. It abounds in poetical graces, lyrical beauties and epic sublimities. Mardana was the life long companion of Guru Nanak. In the same way Satta and Balwanda carried on the tradition of Mardana and filled the air of the village of Khadur with Guru's sacred music. The later Gurus also followed this tradition of keeping bards with them.

For emotional training and aesthetic development, the Guru laid great stress on the place of music in the education of his followers. Recitation in congregation was considered educative. The musical recitations not only provided aesthetic enjoyment through literary and musical elements but also held before the common people the cherished ideals and traditions of the land. The musical literary gatherings seemed to elevate their character and bring strength and solace to their minds in the sorrows and struggles of their day to day life.

Physical Development

'Sport and play are the minds amusement', says Guru Nanak. Physical fitness of the body is the most important factor in the education of an individual. The Guru was fully conscious of its importance. He upheld the dignity of labour and a life of action for physical fitness. He travelled on foot for years together which lent strength and vigour to his body. He spent several years of his life at Kartarpur as a practical farmer. He made social activity and manual

labour, the key to highest wisdom and spiritual exaltation. One of the criteria of selecting Angad was that he was not shy of physical labour.

In Sidh Ghost he admonishes the 'Sidhas' not to torture and starve their bodies in the hope of winning salvation. 'Body is the vehicle of the soul so it must be kept in fit, strong and healthy condition. It is the basis for the performance of various worldly duties and hence must be kept in perfect order. He upholds the dignity of labour like Rousseau in the modern age and wants the child to work like a peasant and think like a philosopher.

This emphasis on physical fitness of the body was carried on by the later gurus also, which afterwards culminated in the martial development of the Sikhs.

Education For Life of Action And Labour

Guru Nanak stands for a life of action. He says that man can carve out his destiny through his own efforts. *34 A man cannot get salvation of life without adoption of karam yoga. The Karam yogi is the real enlightened person. A man devoid of creative action suffers all weaknesses of life. *35

While choosing his successors, Guru Ji was not swayed by affinities of blood relationships but was guided by considerations of merit and worth. He found dignity of labour and hard work in Bhai Lehna and appointed him as his successor.

Guru Ji was not an arm chair philosopher. He himself led a life of creative and constructive action throughout his life. Work and worship, love and labour, silence and song were blended together in the life at Kartarpur. *36

For Guru Ji true wisdom can be realized only through a life of action.

Wisdom cannot be sought through prattle,
To describe its essence also is hard,
Verily those alone can gain wisdom,
who through God's grace,
Lead the very practical life of Karam yoga. *37

That is why he says:
A person of real research becomes a creative man,
But a talkative one who indulges in mere prattle,
Destroys himself. *38

Thus Guru Nanak scorns knowledge that does not lead to action. True testing of learning according to him is action.

Honest labour according to him activated brain, developed social qualities, made individuals self dependent and took them near God. The true path of life is known to those who earn their livelihood with hard labour and part with one tenth of their earnings in the service of the needy. He speaks ill of those religious mendicants who call themselves cultured but go abegging.

“And though proclaimed as a Guru
Begs from door to door,
Never, O man should one fall at the feet
of such a Guru.”* 39

Social And Civic Training

According to Guru Ji, education should aim at the inculcation of civic and social virtues and promotion of social efficiency and happiness. For him essence of wisdom is the service of humanity.

If one dwells on (the essence of) knowledge,
One becometh a benefactor of all. *40

Guru Ji is not individualistic in his aims of education. He wants the greatest good of the greatest number. The most outstanding aspect of his education is his humanism. He wants an educated person, first to evolve his own personality and then serve society. Action and service are the two most important features of his teaching. Since he believes in the service of man, education of his conception should promote among the young pupils spirit of service, social-sensitiveness, co-operation and sacrifice. He emphatically says:

We can get an honourable seat in the court of God,
Only when we practice disinterested service in the world.
And thus win glory, beauty and joy of life. *41

According to Guru Ji, education and spirituality should inspire man to dedicate his life and genius to the service of humanity. Spirituality, wisdom and virtues are futile if they help in personal salvation only. When the yogis who had long retired into the Himalayan peaks for personal salvation ask him about the prevailing conditions of the world of men, he ironically

replies, “when sages and perfect men like you, who have acquired enlightenment, keep hiding in the mountains who will save the world and what do you expect the world of men to be !”

For him really educated man is he who is not egoist and individualistic but sees One God in all and works for their upliftment also.

He alone is an educated man, and a scholar,
Who realizes Divine knowledge, through spiritual experience,
Verily one who sees one God in all,
Cannot assert his egoism at all.*42

For the upliftment of society Guru Nanak placed the idea of social service before his Sikhs. The three cardinal principles of his teachings are 'Kirt Karna' (to earn one's livelihood by the sweat of one's brow) ! Vand Chakana (to share one's earnings with the needy) and Nam Japna (Meditation over the name of God). He not only emphasized monetary contribution for the welfare of society but also manual labour like cleaning the floors, preparing meals, serving water, fanning the congregations. Sewa or voluntary physical labour in the service of community was regarded as the rarest privilege and was sought avidly in its different forms. Even a highly placed Sikh does not mind doing manual labour for the 'lunger' even now-a-days.

Seeing the pitiable plight of the suffering humanity, Guru Nanak could not lead a quiet life at home. In those days when the means of communication were not developed he travelled on foot for days together to give his message of love and service to the suffering humanity. He believed in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. To teach these ideals practically, he started 'Sangat' (community congregations). 'Pangat' (community dining). These social congregations helped to develop the bonds of fellow feeling, co-operation and self sacrifice. 'Lungar' (free community dining) bridges the gulf between the rich and the poor and removes the barriers of caste and creed.

The aim of the education of the Guru was to build a new and better social order. To achieve this aim he worked for the upliftment of the down trodden and women. He called himself the 'lowest of the low'. He preferred to stay with Lalo, a carpenter declining the invitation of a wealthy caste proud Malik Bhago. He was against social exploitation. He wanted the people to live by their honest labour.

Guru Nanak thought highly of women. He pleaded for a very respectable position and status for them. Undoubtedly he was far ahead of his times in asking man to grant social equality to women. The concept of women as man's help mate became one of the distinctive features of Sikh community. This was the first step towards the liberation of women from crippling social restraints imposed upon them during the Muslim times.

Education For Harmonious Development

One single aim of education which embodies all the aims of education is, education as harmonious development of personality, 'to draw out the best from body, mind and spirit. Guru Nanak's major emphasis is on education for self realization and self manifestation. But he asks for the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and spiritual development of child as well.

In his 'Japji', Guru Nanak has described five stages of mental and spiritual development of the individual. These educational stages mark the development of scientific outlook, artistic vision, creative attitude, moral and spiritual strength and help realize the Divine Truth. These stages show that education is successively information, knowledge, wisdom and truth or practical realization of God's vision and Reality.

"Inhabited by numerous kinds of beings and species.
Bearing various names, forms and qualities."

"In the domain of knowledge, knowledge abounds
Myriad kinds of joy, sights, sounds."

"Here consciousness and intellect are refashioned
Here is the mind illumined afresh
Here is the reason reconstituted
And here is gifted the vision of gods and superman."

"Here are the heroes brave and mighty
Brimming with the thought of the almighty
Here are devotees from all lands and climes
Who rejoice blessed with truth in their minds'
"In the domain of Truth
The formless abides." *43

Guru Nanak wants education to prepare people for 'Mukti' (Salvation) 'Jugti' (Art of life) 'Tripti' (satisfaction of life or self fulfillment) 'Bhukti' (Joy of life or bliss of life). He wants man to live happily in this world and earn heavenly bliss hereafter. For Guru Nanak, human life is very important and one should make the best use of it by developing it fully.

To sum up education is regarded as a source of illumination and power by the Guru. It transforms and ennobles man's nature by the progressive and harmonious development of his physical, mental intellectual and spiritual powers. It enables him further to live as a sensible and useful citizen of society. It prepares him for complete living.

For the achievement of these aims of education, the Guru refers to certain formal and informal studies and activities in his writings, a sort of curriculum in our present day terminology.

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THE CURRICULUM

The term curriculum includes all the learning experiences designed by the school with a view to enable the pupils to achieve the objectives of education. The class room learning, the participation of pupils in various school activities and general experiences make the school curriculum.” In the present times education is regarded as the sum total of experiences. An educated man is an improved man a desirable type of individual in possession of certain sorts of knowledge and skills and having certain attitudes regarded worth living. The educated man would be one whose intellectual abilities have been developed who is sensitive to matters of moral and aesthetic concern who has regard for the importance of truth, accuracy and elegance in thinking.” *1

Guru Nanak was mainly a religious and moral teacher and the curriculum designed by him has got a strong ethical and religious basis. He wanted to teach the people higher moral , religious, social and cultural values. He wanted to promote values of abiding nature. In his ‘Patti’ (acrostic tablet) he explains the ingredients of the curriculum making in a general way. Besides his Patti, Dakhani Onkar and Janam Sakhis, the anecdotes of his life throw some light on the constituents of his curriculum.

Under the inspiration and guidance of the guru, schools were attached to Gurudwaras. These schools catered to the educational needs of the young and the old. Instruments of mass education these institutions as Dr. Leitner refers provided for the teaching of Gurumukhi, religious books like Panch Granthi and Guru Granth Sahib and elementary arithmetic.* 2

The contents of education according to Guru Nanak should mainly embody the following:

1. Religious And Moral Education

Guru Nanak emphasizes religious and moral education. God realization being his goal of education, his content of education is religious and ethical in character. When Guru Nanak was a child, he was taken to indigenous school to acquire education. He soon picked up the elementary knowledge taught by the teacher and pestered the teacher as his biographies say, for more knowledge. Not satisfied by the knowledge that he imparted him, he asked him with great humility and respect, “Sir, what is the scope of your learning ?” The school master replied that he had read all the branches of knowledge, Vedas and Shastras. He knew arithmetic, and book keeping. He had learnt to cast up accounts post ledgers and day books and strike balances.” But Guru Nanak was not satisfied by this answer and told his teacher that the

knowledge imparted by him pertained to the advancement of material objectives which could only, lead to the enjoyment of sense organs. And in a passage of great beauty and wisdom Nanak told him the very secret of education saying that he preferred the study of divine knowledge to worldly accomplishment. *3

Burn thy earthy cravings,
grind their ashes well,
And make thy ink there from,
let a pure, high mind thy paper be,
Make love thy pen and heart thy writer,
Thou write as the Teacher True
doeth guide thee,
Write the name of God, write His praises,
Write of the Lord that hath no limit,
end or measure.
O, friend, learn to cast this account
So that when and where an account,
is called from thee,
Thou mayest win a mark of honour true.* 4

If we analyze the above passage we find that the Guru has asked his followers to develop higher values in life and sing the praises of lord.” Janamsakhis are of the opinion that Patti was written at the time of his school life. Although we may not agree with this belief yet the fact remains that Patti enables us to know the content of Guru Nanak’s education.

Patti (acrostic tablet) is a beautiful composition in ‘Rag Asa’ on the thirty five letters of the alphabet. It explains the meaning that each letter should assume to make knowledge worth acquiring. All along the hymn he talks of things of ultimate value. He talks of God, Guru, Karma, good deeds, ego sublimation, ultimate destiny of man, transmigration and universe. He emphasizes that education should be based on right actions, sportsmanship, responsibility, discipline of life, and optimism. It should be God centered. We must reap the fruit of our actions. So education should inculcate a sense of performing one’s duties and responsibilities in the most befitting manner. So that when an account is called for, it should be given in a befitting manner.

O, you foolish egoist, why do you forget God ?
You will be regarded an educated man only,
When you render a successful account of
Your life’s deeds to the Master,
Through proper discharge of your duties and responsibilities.* 5

One who, by the grace of the Guru,

Realizes Him through right education,
Hath no account to render. *6

Those who practice Truth,
and do noble deeds of service,
Alone enjoy fruit of life. *7

Life is transitory, God is the only Reality. To free oneself from the bondage of transmigration, one should take shelter in God. For that gift of Divine knowledge is needed. Hence, the study of religion was emphasized in the curriculum of Guru Ji.

Writing about the content of education that the Guru would favour McLeod writes that the instructions recorded in the Adi Granth and those delivered by Guru Nanak in gatherings of his disciples at Kartarpur had the same form.

The content would, however, be the same. There would be the same emphasis upon the greatness of God, upon His gracious self revelation, upon the perils of the human condition, and upon the paramount necessity of mediation on the divine Name. Trust in conventional external forms would be exposed as essentially futile. Sometimes by means of gentle irony and at other times by direct denial of their efficacy. Those who placed their confidence in status confirmed by caste or wealth should be sternly admonished and one who descended to religious hypocrisy would be strongly condemned. *8

Writing about the content of education recommended by Guru Nanak, *9 Dr. Ahuja writes;

This content of education was fully in agreement with his aim of education which was self fulfillment and self expression, infusion of piety and good virtues, compromise between asceticism and materialism or reconciliation between spiritual life and worldly pursuits.

This religious education was based upon precept and example. The youth was to learn religion through their contact with the teacher and taking part in the congregational prayers. Kirtan, katha and meditation in the Gurudwara. The students were also taught to do acts of social and religious service. The study of any elaborate texts of religion was certainly not recommended by Guru Nanak.

2. Teaching Of Mother Tongue

The second subject of curriculum recommended by Guru Nanak is the study of mother tongue. He made Punjabi, the spoken language of his times as the vehicle of his expression. In the days of Guru Ji, illiteracy was wide spread. Instead of Sanskrit and Persian he preferred to impart instruction in Punjabi. It helped him to take education to the doors of the masses. He seems to understand the psychology of the child and wants that child should get education in his mother

tongue. He feels that the learning of one's own language is very important to keep intact one's culture. His own contribution to the development of Punjabi language is unrivalled. He is a true Nationalist. He is critical of the study of Persian, the foreign language for Indians of his times. At several places he condemns the adoption of foreign culture and language by the people.

- (1) The kashatriyas have given up their real Dharma,
They have adopted the language (culture)
of the ill intentioned foreign rulers. *10
- (2) People have changed their tongue and
prefer to be greeted in the muslim way. *11

3. Study Of Arithmetic And Book-Keeping

But the Guru did not ignore the learning of the language of his times. He studied Sanskrit and went through Vedic literature. He learnt Persian at the feet of one Rukh ul Din which enabled him to become store keeper later on.

Writing about the elements of Sikh elementary schools of Guru Nanak's times, John Clark is of the view:

When, in some instances, Gurudwara schools were opened, their instruction dealt with the reading of Gurumukhi tongue and with the merest rudiments of arithmetic. Their primary concern was however, religious education from which moral guidance was incidental. *12

From this illustration of John Clark, we get an other subject of teaching, that is rudimentary arithmetic, Guru Nanak and later on the other Sikh Gurus advocated both by precept and example the pursuit of some occupation, trade, craft, agriculture etc., where by one could earn one's livelihood honestly. The knowledge of arithmetic was indispensable for the pursuit of these occupations. Teaching of arithmetic was traditional and common in all schools particularly attached to the Gurudwaras.

During the times of the Guru the Hindus had lost political entity. They had taken to shop keeping, trade and commerce as their first and last resort. Every Hindu boy was taught the art of book keeping. This knowledge or skill was almost universal among the Khatarias and Vaishas and there were various schools which catered to this public demand. The Gurus were all Khatries and well versed in arithmetic and book keeping. *13

It can be assumed that the most of the Sikhs who were in business knew arithmetic for they had learnt it in Sikh schools. The Gurumukhi Schools studied by Dr. Leitner had definite provision for the teaching of arithmetic. *14

4. Study Of Biographies, History And Culture

The curriculum designed by Guru Nanak is mainly scriptural, devotional and ethical in character. After Guru Nanak his Janam Sakhi (Biography) came to be included in the curriculum. Guru Angad is said to have compiled Guru Nanak's life story with the help of Bala, the life companion of Guru Nanak. This biography compiled by Guru Angad formed the first prose work in Punjabi of Nanak as it contained his teachings as well as reminiscences. It established its position as the sacred book of the Sikhs. The Ramayana and Mahabharata being inaccessible to them, it became the only source of moral and religious instruction to thousands who never knew a word of Sanskrit. " *15

Biography was a very interesting piece of literature produced so far, as it combined truth with fiction, realism with romance and history with biography. Hence such biographical literature gained popularity and further additions were made to it. Bhai Gurdas wrote warren (verses). Several other Janam Sakhis came to be written and formed the content of education. By the time of the tenth Guru, there was a large body of his biographical literature available for reading by the children and adults. Vachitar Natak or the wonderous drama is the autobiography of the tenth guru containing elements of history and romance. Apart from its religious or devotional aspects, the biographical literature has literary and popular approach inspired by the instinct of hero worship.

5. Music And Poetry

"There is dharamsala in every house and Kirtan (congregational singing) is going on constantly," *16 says Bhai Gurudas. One of the main features of Guru Nanak's curriculum is its musical bias. It is not formal, prosaic or dry but abounds in poetical graces and lyrical beauties. For him verse and music impart to thought emotion, beauty, brevity and power. The person who sings or recites the divine music or even devotedly listens to it is filled with joy and reverence. The effect of music upon the mind is profound and inspiring. The mind loses itself in devotion and rapture through it.

Guru Nanak recognizes the great value of music and poetry. That is why in his Bani, we find the union of music and poetry which leads the singer as well as the listener to bliss. He has greatly emphasized congregational singing in Gurudwaras. For him Kirtan is full of bliss and deep in qualities. All of his Bani is written in verse and composed in Ragas. Mardana, the rebock-player was his life long companion. The later Gurus followed in his foot steps and had bards in their darbars.

Guru Nanak was a religious teacher. The main aim of his education is God-realization. It is a well known fact that through music the mind loses itself in devotion and bliss and is easily attuned to God. The example of Mira is before us. That is why musical recitation of the Shabadas form an important part of the curriculum of the Guru's disciples.

6. Physical Education

“Sport and play are the minds amusement.” *17 says Guru Nanak. He wanted to build up a community of strong people. He emphasized the fitness of the body for spiritual as well as for temporal reasons.” Starve, not the body, it is the vehicle of the soul. Take care of the body that you may meditate upon the Lord and apply to his services said Guru Nanak to Saikh Brham who was doing penance. With times the Gurus came to place more and more emphasis on the value of sports and games. Tradition tells us that Guru Angad was very keen on physical fitness. He ordered his followers to take part in drill and competitive games after the morning service. Every community centre had a wrestling arena attached to it. He started a tradition which made it easy to raise troops of able bodied men from among the disciples by Guru Hargobind and Gobind Singh.

As Guru Nanak emphasized the dignity of labour very much and he also stresses that the human body should be kept in perfect order, it may be assumed that physical games must have been recommended by him. In the training of Lehna (Later on Guru Angad Dev), Guru Nanak laid great emphasis on service and dignity of labour.

7. Manual Labour Arts And Crafts:

The professions of arts and crafts and manual work were given highest respect and made instrument for truly spiritual and virtuous life by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Guru Nanak worked as a farmer at Kartarpur in the last days of his life. Guru Angad performed all sorts of manual jobs for his master. Though old Guru Amar Dass served Guru Angad with the fullest devotion. Guru Angad was selected by Guru Nanak as his successor not only because he had achieved spiritual perfection and could perform the humblest tasks and submit to the most strenuous labour in the service of humanity The Guru treated the manual worker with utmost kindness and affection. Guru Nanak’s attachment with Bhai Lalo is proverbial.

The later Gurus contributed a lot for the development of trade and industry. The building of new cities by the Guru gave a fillip to the development of trade. Interests of trade and commerce were further served by the foundation by the Gurus of a series of towns and cities Kartarpur, Anandpur, Amritsar and quite a few others for instance which became centres not only of Sikh worship, prayer and pilgrimage but also of active trade and commerce.

The teachings of the Guru had a direct bearing on the practical problems of life. All prejudices against honest labour were removed and the people began to take an active part in the worldly affairs. Henceforth we often hear of horse trading banking embroidery and carpentry among the Sikhs. The Gurus patronized and encouraged them as this was also one of the noblest ways of doing service to the country. *18

8. Informal Programme

An educated man is an improved man. Guru Nanak designed the daily routine of his disciples in such a way as to provide them practical training in social service, moral and spiritual development. The Guru and his Sikhs began their daily work with meditation early in the morning in the Gurudwaras. After meditation there was a musical recitation of shabadas, Katha discussion and prayer and then they dispersed for the days labour. In the evening they again assembled in the Gurudwaras. There was musical singing of Gurbani, Katha, discussion and prayer. Individual instruction was imparted to those who sought it. Through this daily routine of disciplined life the disciples learnt a life of action, service exchange of ideas and corporate living. It also provided them with intellectual and spiritual food. Higher moral values were inculcated.

In the schools attached to the dharamshalas students were taught to take part in the activities of the community kitchens and social service. On the occasion of the celebration of festivals and the sacred days, the students were invited to participate in them. They delivered short speeches, recitations and singing of Shabadas. Their efforts were appreciated and at time participants were given prizes for their performance. This participation must have trained them in public speaking. The practice is in vogue in the Gurudwaras even now. Through various corporate activities, Guru Nanak tried to teach his disciples the qualities of equality, fraternity and service. In the Dharmashalas sweeping floors, cleansing of utensils, fetching of water, preparation of bread were meant to teach the art of social service and dignity of labour. Guru Ka Lunge (the community kitchen) removed the barriers of caste and creed. Service of mankind was given an important place in his scheme of education. Through service the disciple and the Guru became one. These co-curricular activities training the disciple in the art of social service formed an integral part of the scheme of education of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

It will be unfair to criticize Guru Nanak's curriculum being too limited. The historical fact is that the curriculum of the elementary schools of 15th century was not very cumbersome. Writing about the curriculum of 15th century, F.E. Keay writes:

The curriculum included reading, writing
the composition of letters and elementary
arithmetic and accounts either commercial
or agricultural or both. Very few text books were in use. *19

The curriculum of those times was not very heavy is borne out further by S.M. Jaffer. In the primary stage, the curriculum comprised reading, writing and elementary arithmetic. *20

With the lapse of time, these elementary schools based on Guru Nanak's teachings, came to have a wider programme. Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru was trained in the use of astronomy, agriculture, administration and other sciences by Bhai Buddha, the family teacher. *21

And in the times of Guru Gobind Singh, this curriculum still became wider when seats of learning were established at Anandpur Sahib and Damdama Sahib. The curriculum came to include teaching of Sanskrit, Punjabi, literature, Philosophy, Politics, Astronomy, Mathematics, literary criticism etc. Guru Gobind Singh, himself was a great scholar, poet and educationist and he gave a great stimulus and patronage to this literary drive. *22

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METHODS OF EDUCATION

Guru Nanak was neither class room teacher in the present sense of the term nor did he had specially designed and arranged classes to teach. He had a large following, a mass of people who would come to see him and receive blessings, a word of advice or instruction from him or he himself would move from place to place to convey his message to them. As such Guru Ji's methods of teaching others were more informal, traditional and of indirect nature than being formal, though the Guru was very clear and formal about that he wanted to impart to his followers. He developed such effective ways of educating the people around him that we cannot help but take a careful note of them.

A. Education of Adults:

Since the mass of people were adults their education in religion and morality was the real objective of the Guru. To educate the adults, Guru Nanak adopted the following informal methods of teaching.

1. **Kirtan:** According to McLeod the marked feature of Guru Nanak's method was its musical basis. It was not formal, prosaic or dry but abounded in poetical graces, lyrical beauties and epic sublimities. The impression is also that of a revered teacher giving expression to his experience in simple direct hymns of superb poetic quality. *1

This musical power of Guru Nanak worked wonders. He changed many a 'Sajjan Thugs' with the help of his musical songs. That music helps to refine emotions, is a psychological fact. It washes away from the mind, the dust of every day life. It fills the mind with bliss and peace. It imparts sublime happiness. It purifies the life and helps to link it with God. Guru Nanak was aware of immense power of music and made its ample use in his method of teaching. Mardana was his life long companion. This tradition of Kirtan as a method of educating the masses was carried on by the later Gurus and is still in vogue in Gurudwaras.

2. **Story Method:** Even upto the beginning of twentieth century, story method of teaching Janam Sakhis and history was found in elementary schools attached to the Gurudawaras. The Katha system in the Gurudawaras bears this fact out that Guru Nanak Dev Ji used story method of teaching small children and adults.

"The stories of the great elders
Their worthy sons repeat.

And out of these accept what is pleasing to the Guru
And do the like deeds.” *2

Says the third Guru. This story method of teaching the adults and children was carried on by the later Gurus for teaching their disciples religion, history and social ethics. Biographies came to be written by the times of Guru Angad. Stories from the times of preceding Gurus and the Sikhs of their times were narrated. *3 These biographical stories and ballads, apart from their religious and devotional aspect, made a popular appeal and inspired many for a life of courage and action.

3. **Celebration of Festivals:** In keeping with the Indian tradition, the Gurus held congregations, fairs and celebrated national festivals like Diwali, Baisakhi and Maghi so that the people from different parts of the country might get together. At such gatherings the Gurus would address the people. Not only they organized fairs and festivals for teaching the masses, they also attended the fairs, festivals organized by the people at their holy places. Baba (Nanak) visited the places of pilgrimage. He went round seeing them all on festive days. *4 At such gatherings the Guru found an occasion to educate the masses. He visited Haridwar, Kurukshetra, Jagan Nath Puri at such festive occasions. His encounter with the people of Haridwar is quite well-known. Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa on Baisakhi day. On the occasion of these festivals Guru Nanak and his succeeding Gurus found an occasion to educate the masses.
4. **Sense of Humour And Dramatic Technique:** Another speciality of Guru Nanak’s method of teaching was his sense of humour and dramatic touch. When encountered with challenging situation, he created a counter situation which provided food for thought. At Haridwar he threw water in the opposite direction and was able to convince the people around him through his simple, affectionate and homely way that throwing water towards the sun was not going to help their dead ancestors. At Mecca he slept with his legs towards Kabba, the seat of God. When the head priest asked him not to stretch his legs towards the holy place, Nanak said in all humility “Brother, please, change the direction of my feet where you do not see God.” And the head priest was calmed down. These dramatic situations are coupled with a sense of humour.

One more fact becomes clear from the above example. That he did not lecture or indulge in abstract or complex theorizing. He taught through practical illustration, proceeded from particular to general. First he aroused the curiosity of the people by acting in a peculiar way, motivated them, prepared their minds and then brought them to his view point by bringing into light the folly of their ways of thinking.

- 5. Individual Differences Kept In View:** Guru Nanak adopted his methods of teaching according to individual differences. Gifted as he was with an insight into human nature, he rose according to the situation. He came down to the mental level of the people. When he was teaching the masses he taught in a simple way, in their own language, took examples from life situations and proceeded in a humorous and dramatic way. But when he had to deal with scholars and pandits, he was capable of loftiest of thoughts and could argue with them on a much higher mental level. We read of many instances of the Guru having thought provoking dialogues, discussions and debates with the learned scholars, Yogis and Sidhas.
- 6. Discussion And Debates:** Guru Nanak did not impose his views on others simply because he was held in esteem by them or he was taken by the masses as their spiritual guide. He would indirectly pose a point and involve the people in discussion. By patiently, sweetly and convincingly arguing, he would establish a point. The 'Sidh Goshti' is a beautiful collection of discussions Guru Nanak held with Yogi Sidhas. Bhai Gurdas highlights these encounters when he says, "Guru Nanak met all Sidhas, Nathas and followers of avatars and after discussions made them realize the futility of their doctrines.* 5
- McLeod gives many such instances of discussions and debates of Guru Nanak with many a learned scholars. In Banaras, "Guru Nanak held discussion with Chatur Dass, a learned pandit. A discourse ensued ending with a complete recitation of the lengthy work entitled onkar. *6 On another occasion, in the village of Achal Batala, the Guru had a memorable discussion with many yogis gathered for the annual shivratri fair. The Guru is said to have defeated them in discussion. *7 Many disputations must have been held with Nath Yogis for the members of this sect are addressed directly in several polemical compositions recorded in Guru Granth Sahib. These discussions were a regular feature of the Guru's educational work. In the congregational gatherings, open discussions were held where individual doubts were resolved.
- 7. Quest And Inquiry:** Guru Nanak's method of teaching is not merely theoretical. He seems to be more modern in his approach as his method of teaching stresses quest and inquiry, a sense of experimentation and dignity of labour on the part of the people. True knowledge can be gained only through practical life of action.

Wisdom cannot be sought through prattle

To describe its essence is also hard,
Verily those alone can gain wisdom
Who through God's grace
Lead the very practical life of Karam Yoga. *8

That is why he asks his pupils to adopt a spirit of quest and inquiry in learning. Then, and, then only he can gain real education and become a creative personality. He stresses upon his pupil to question the truth of prevailing customs, traditions and practices. He emphasizes the acceptance of truth only after rational examination. He wants to develop scientific or rational attitude on the part of his disciple.

A person of real research
becomes a creative man
But a talkative one who indulges,
in mere prattle
destroys himself.* 9

- 8. Individual Versus Collective Method of Teaching:** According to McLeod a second feature of the Kartarpur pattern would have been regular instructions imparted by the Guru. Such instructions would frequently have been given to individual followers, but the form in which we find it recorded in the Adi Granth will correspond more closely to the instruction delivered in the regular gathering of the disciples. *10

But Dr. Ahuja is of the opinion that the Guru gave individual instruction to those who sought it and mass instruction to those who gathered round him in the morning congregation. *11 Thus we find a blend of collective and individual method of teaching in Guru Nanak, according to the needs of the situations. History also bears this fact out. He went to Sajjan Thug, Nur Shah, Kauda Rakhash individually and reformed them through his personal touch.

In Guru Nanak's method of teaching we find close contact between the teacher and the taught. In Rohil Khand, the practice of slavery was in vogue. The Guru went there, got himself enslaved and served the Rohila Nawab with such patience and goodwill that the Nawab put an end to the practice. This change he could bring about through coming into contact with him. His method is that of loving persuasion and suggestion.

- 9. Love And Sympathy:** Guru Nanak's method of teaching was of sweet persuasion, love and sympathy. Kauda Rakshash wanted to burn him in the hot cauldron but he smiled sweetly and the Raksha stood disarmed. It was with sweet persuasion, love and sympathy that he reformed Sajjan and Nur Shah.

Guru Ji respected human personality. He did not hesitate to touch the leper, to eat and live with the outcasts. He saw divinity latent in man. Individual was of the greatest importance to him. So same respect, appreciation and sympathy is found in his method of teaching the people. He always appealed to the good in man. That is why destructive criticism is not found in him. He asked the Hindus to become good Hindus and Muslims to become good Muslims.

10. Psychological: Guru Nanak's method of teaching was quite psychological. He was equally successful in his dealings with the robbers, the thieves, cruel kings, superstitious persons and learned scholars. When he came into contact with people he was able to put himself in their places, to read their thoughts, to realize their fears, to understand their aspirations, to see their good points as well as their faults and to sympathise with them in their struggles.

11. Travelling: In the past great importance was attached to travelling as means of education. Rousseau in his Emile wants Emile to travel when he attains youth so as to gain knowledge of actual life. Travelling is a book which one must read. Although Guru Nanak has not advocated this method of teaching openly but from his own life we can draw this inference that he valued travels for the purpose of understanding people and places at close quarters. He spent about twenty eight years of his life travelling far and wide. This must have added to his breadth of knowledge." I have seen places of pilgrimage on river banks, the nine regions of the earth, shops, cities, markets. *12 The other Gurus also took extensive journeys. This must have added to their breadth of knowledge and provided them opportunities to re-educate masses.

B. EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Elementary schools attached with the dharamshalas were opened by the Sikh Gurus to teach children. As we have seen the masses were taught in an informal way. But efforts were made to make the education of the children more systematic and organized.

1. Oral Cum Memorisation Method: In ancient India as well as medieval times there was great dependence on memory. 'Rote learning was given a large scale and the principal aim of the teacher was to pass on to the pupil the traditional learning which he himself had received. Lessons were usually repeated aloud and were recited in a sing song manner. Several boys frequently joined in chorus. *13

In Muslim India the method of teaching in vogue was very simple. A novice was first taught the alphabet with correct pronunciation, punctuation and signs of accents. After learning he was taught their combinations. He was given some exercises daily which he read and wrote on his takhti and gradually learnt the art of reading and writing. *14

Writing about the method of teaching used by the Guru Dr. Ahuja writes, “ As regards method of teaching it may be easily assumed that it was same age old one that had been current among the people from times immemorial. The oral method of memorizing as means of assimilation were chiefly stressed in process of learning.” *15

- 2. Medium of Poetry & Song:** This memorization of alphabet and tables was however, not mechanical. The Guru introduced a letter with a verse in praise of God and saint. The ‘Acrostic (Patti) repeated by Guru Nanak is a pretty long poem divided into thirty five couples dealing with the immortality of God and the mortality of man in a picturesque language.

The child’s education began with learning alphabet or painti (thirty five letters) by rote, each letter being accompanied by a motto or oral maxim, which according to Leitner had come down from the time of Guru Angad who is believed to have written the first primer of Gurmukhi.” Guru Angad did not consider it beneath his dignity to write primers for children and he wrote a number of mottos or moral maxims which accompanied the letters of the alphabet e.g.

1. KAKA – Kakka Kar Karte Ki Puja (Worship of Creator)
2. PAPA – Pap Karo Mat Koe (Don’t Commit any sin)
3. J JUJA – Juth Mat Bolna (Tell no lies). *16

- 3 Recitation And Repetition:** When the script was mastered on patti or on dusty floor or a layer of sand, the pupil was introduced to Japji. The method was recitation and repetition. The Guru spoke out or read out the verse, line after line and the pupil repeated it and committed it to memory. In this revision special attention was paid to pauses, accents and intonation and spelling and neatness in writing. At the dispersion of the school, repetition of the day’s work encouraged great emulation.

During this whole procedure of teaching, there was a close touch between the teacher and taught. The number of students being small, individual attention was paid to each and every student.

During this whole procedure of teaching, there was a close touch between the teacher and taught. The number of students being small, individual attention was paid to each and every student.

- 4. Monitorial System:** An efficient pupil who was quick at learning was styled as monitor. He assisted the teacher in teaching script, giving correction and reading out letters, words and verses. The teacher first and then the monitor led the way in the demonstrative reciting and writing.

5. **Story Method:** Children love to hear stories. Full use of this method was made by the Guru for teaching language, ethics and morality to the children. Biographical literature made a popular appeal to children for its story element.
6. **The Teacher's Art:** When all is said, the fact remains that Guru Nanak gave great place to the teacher. A good teacher would evolve his own methods suiting his circumstances. The living touch of a good teacher works wonders. Guru ji has again dwelt upon the qualities of the teacher so that he would make use of all possible opportunities to guide and instruct his pupils properly.

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8

THE TEACHER

In any system of education, the teacher is the pivotal factor. No educational edifice can be raised or maintained without the strength and help of the teacher. The impact of the teacher goes far deeper in effect than any educational programme howsoever thoughtfully designed.

Guru Nanak gives the teachers a very high status, a noble role and challenging task of raising the pupil to nobler levels of life. The position of true teacher or guru is of utmost importance in the entire philosophy of Guru Ji. The teacher is the beacon light who shows the right path to the disciple. Mental development, moral elevation and spiritual regeneration are possible with the help and guidance of the guru alone. All worship, meditation, learning of books may prove futile unless one comes under the impact of a higher and inspiring personality. In the first fundamental of the Sikh religion, it is emphasized that it is through the teacher alone that one can realize God. *1

The Role of The Teacher

A true teacher serves as beacon light that shows the right path to the disciple. Spiritual, mental, moral and social development is possible with his help and guidance alone. He blesses the disciple with 'Dharma' (Piety). Artha (material gains) Kama (fulfillment of worldly desires) 'Moksha (final emancipation). He helps the pupil in manifold ways.

A – The Teacher Leads To God Realization

God realization is one great aim of life according to Guru Nanak. This aim of life can hardly be achieved without the help of a true teacher. Himself imbued with spiritual fervor, he kindles the disciple's soul by a spark of light and awakens in his mind the consciousness of God. He is the vital link, the essential mediator of divine truth. It is only through the Guru that disciple can have communion with God.

The Guru is the ladder, the dignity, the rafts,
By means of which one reaches God,
The Guru is the lake, the ocean, the boat,
The sacred place of pilgrimage, the river,
If it pleases thee, I am cleansed by bathing in the lake of truth. *2

Thus in Guru Nanak's case, the characteristic emphasis upon the absolute necessity of the Guru is found for God realization. It is through the grace of true Guru that spiritual wisdom (Vedas), the divine music (Nadas) and divine union (Yoga) are revealed to disciple. He finds the light within.

Without the Guru, there can be no bhakti, no love,
Without the Guru, there is no access, to the company of saints,
Without the Guru, one blindly engages in futile endeavor
But with the Guru one's man' is purified,
For its filth is purged by the word. *3

The true guru is a creative and perfect personality who helps in various walks of life and ultimately leads to identification with Truth, the God. It is with the help of the true teacher that the mind of the disciple is cleansed and emancipated. The veil of ego is torn asunder and he sees God everywhere.

When the true guru is merciful,
Faith is perfected.
When the true guru is merciful,
there is no grief.
When the true guru is merciful,
the love of God is enjoyed.
When the true guru is merciful,
there is no fear of death.
When the true guru is merciful,
the bodily health and happiness is enjoyed.
When the true guru is merciful,
nine treasures of Name are obtained.
When the true guru is merciful,
we are fully identified with Truth. *4

In Guru Nanak's conception of the guru one most important thing is to be kept in mind. He takes God as the Supreme Teacher, the original source of all light, wisdom and spiritualism. Unless one regards Him as the Guru without reservations one is without sweetness and light. But one may not be able to adopt God as the Guru directly. For him God's guruship expresses itself through enlightened personalities, one's own inner atma, meditation, nature and revealed books. But to gain from all these sources in the fullest manner, the indispensable help of the teacher is needed who will fully utilize these means to achieve his aim, the perfection of his disciple's personality and helping him to realize himself.

B- Real Knowledge Is Acquired Through The Teacher

Knowledge illumines, says the Gita. *5 The Vedas and the Upanishadas also hold this view. But it is the teacher who leads the pupil from darkness to light with the help of knowledge. Advatarko, upnishad explains the meaning of the word Guru, 'Gu' means inertia, matter, ignorance and 'Ru' means light which illumines the consciousness. Thus the word 'Guru' means

liberator of human life from the shackles of fear and ignorance. The Guru is one who removes ignorance and illumines the mind. * 6

A man without intellectual light,
Needs the help of guru, to gain knowledge *7
When one reflects on the guru's word,
One is rid of one's ignorance. *8

Knowledge is power and this power of knowledge one acquires through one's Guru who takes the torch of knowledge into the dark caves of the pupil's mind.

The teacher enkindles the spirit of 'Nisus' in the child and inspires him with progressive outlook of 'thus far and go further'. The guru perfects the disciples mind through constant discipline of knowledge and rational thinking. He inculcates scientific thinking and reasoning in them. Guru Nanak found people throwing water towards the sun at Haridwar. He started throwing water towards the sun at Haridwar in the opposite direction. If their water could reach the sun why his water could not reach Kartarpur which was much nearer ? This spirit of questioning and rational analysis widens the mental horizon of the people. With proper guidance and right knowledge he becomes free from superstitions and dogmas. His vision becomes clear and he is able to see the reality. Without the Guru there is darkness. He dispels the ignorance of human mind and shows the path of reality rending the veil asunder, "Real knowledge is gained only with the help of the true teacher", says the first Guru.

The water is kept controlled in a pitcher,
But there can be made no pitcher,
without the use of water.
Similarly mind is kept under control,
through attainment of knowledge,
But knowledge cannot be attained, without the help of the Guru. *9

All the godly values and saintly virtues are inherent in us. There are latent faculties in man. But they lie dormant. It is the torch of the Guru that energizes them. Mind has great powers. But they blossom with the help of the Guru.

The Gems, the Jewels, the Rubies
are in the mind,
If one were to find,
Should hearken to the Guru's call,
Tis He who giveth to each and all
(on Him, on Him, O let me call) *10
Yea, in the Guru's words are the jewels of wisdom
And whosoever seeketh, findeth these. * 11

In his quest for knowledge and the right way of life the pupil's mind wanders, it experiences uncertainty and instability, it is torn by doubts and conflicts, inconsistency haunts it. In such a state of mind, only the guidance of the guru imparts high and restores confidence. It offers direction and purpose to one's life. Mental doubts depart and with stable mind one marches ahead. Surely, one is on the right path, when kindly light leads.

The mind is the king,
The mind is the ruler
But one can enlighten it,
Without the guidance of the guru. * 12

C- Social Status Through The Teacher

A rightly educated person gets honour in society. A true teacher helps the pupil to inculcate various virtues in life which develop his personality. With fully blossomed personality, he spreads fragrance around him. Education promotes in him social and civic virtues like fellow feeling, disinterested service of mankind and co-operation which promote social efficiency and happiness. For him essence of wisdom becomes the service of humanity.

"If one dwells on the essence of knowledge,
one becomes the benefactor of all." *13

under the guidance of true teacher the disciple leads a noble and disciplined life. He inculcates such high ideals in life that he becomes not only socially acceptable, but also acceptable in the court of Lord.

"A rightly educated person whose soul and mind
Are awakened into the realm of self realization,
becomes acceptable in the court of Lord.

Surely, there flies the flag of God's kingdom over his head" *14

Right knowledge imparted by the right teacher raises the pupil in social estimation. The kind and amount of the contribution an educated individual makes to his society is greatly linked with what the teacher gives to him.

Through (the Guru's) wisdom, one's mind,
Bathes in the waters of the Name the Nector,
And findeth, then, the holy of holies within,
Yea, in the Guru's words are the jewels (of wisdom)
And whosoever seeketh, findeth these...

Verily, one who gets education
through the grace of the guru,
gets the honour of life.
Yea, without the Guru, one loseth the merit of life. *15

D- The Teacher Raises The Pupil Morally

A good teacher not only helps in the social development of the pupil, he helps in the moral upliftment also. The transformation of Sajjan Thug and Kauda Rakshas underlines the great truth that that in every one of us there are good as well as evil tendencies and it is only when

the good tendencies get forceful encouragement through the magic touch of a great teacher that man projects an image of goodness and nobility.

The true guru helps the disciple to overcome his weaknesses, vices and become morally strong. His own example of living and techniques help to build a good character and strengthen his moral fiber. He is able to resist temptations. He becomes pure in words, deeds and thoughts. The guru with his moral force converts the natural man into an ideal man.

The guru is an ocean, a mine of jewels,
In which lie a multiple of precious stones.
I bath in the pure waters when it is the
Lord's will and thus by meditation,
I acquire the five blessings,
(Truth, contentment, compassion, dharma, and patience).
I abandon lust, anger, deceit and evil
And enshrine the true name in my heart.
The wave of haumai and covetousness has spent itself,
The Merciful one has been found.
Nanak, there is no 'tirath' like the guru,
(nothing to compare to) the true Guru Gopal. *16

On meeting the true Guru one becomes pure by adopting the discipline of truth. The disciple who serves the Guru and analyses his teachings, finds jewels and rubies in it. He baths his mind in the nectar of knowledge which contains the purifying elements of the sixty eight 'Tirthas'. There is no 'tirath' like the Guru Gopal.

The disciple becomes Gurmukh, a God centered soul with the grace of the guru. And being Gurmukh, he is blest with the Name, compassion and purity. Activity based guru's word, makes him ethically perfect. He keeps this motto before him.

“Truth is high but higher still is truthful living.” Thus in the career of the disciple, the personality of the guru is all along operative, commanding his whole being and shaping his life in its diviner issues. Without such a personality, there would be no cohesion, no direction in the moral forces of society and in spite of a thousand kinds of knowledge, there would still be utter darkness. *17

This transformation of the disciple comes through close association with the guru. This relationship with the teacher does not remain on physical level. It becomes communion of the soul with the soul. The ray is united with the sun, water blends with water. Light blends with light. Perfection is achieved. Lehna becomes Angad, the flesh of his Master’s flesh and the bone of his master’s bone. The Guru bows before the disciple and hails him as the guru.

He who lives the right life is my disciple,
Nay, he is my master and I am his servant.

This identification of the guru with the disciple is a unique phenomenon of Guru Nanak’s conception of the Guru.

Qualities And Personality Of The Teacher

Guru Nanak frequently refers to the hard discipline of mind and body through which the teacher should go and the qualities he should strenuously try to cultivate to become an ideal teacher. His concept of the teacher is rooted in Indian tradition. In the Rigveda, the term Guru signifies the weighty and mighty. The Guru is a weighty and mighty personality. He is the embodiment of wisdom. He is the means to ultimate knowledge which is identical with ultimate Being. The Guru believes that the teacher liberates himself as also others. He who has realized the True Lord is the True Guru. The ennobling touch of his living personality transforms the lives of the pupils says the first Guru.

Meet the true guru, the friend in whose
mind the ocean of virtues dwells.
Meet the true guru, the beloved who has
destroyed his own I am ness,
Blessed is the perfect teacher, who
reforms the whole world,
By his teachings.*18

Example is more important than instruction. A teacher teaches through his personality. His presence communicates truth, purity, joy and happiness. The personality of such a teacher can be very well described in the words of Shri Aurobindo.” The great master is much less a teacher than a presence pouring the divine consciousness and its constituting light and power and purity and bliss into all who are receptive around him.” *19 The first quality of good teacher

and most necessary of all is that he must know his subject. He must know what he teaches. He should be a seeker after truth, a constant student. According to Guru Nanak the real aim of the Guru is to awaken divine consciousness in the pupil. Self realization being the aim of education he is to lead the pupil from darkness to light from humanity to divinity from untruth to truth.

He alone is a really educated teacher,
Who is God centered or Gurmukh,
Who awakens divine intelligence in his disciples
Who mediates on the divine Name with concentration,
Who cherishes the Name in his mind,
Who gains the gain of God realization,
Which is the main purpose of human life. *20

An educated person a scholar or seer is one,
Who puts the garland of Ram Nam round his neck. *21

Guru Nanak is of opinion that a true teacher is God centred and awakens divine intelligence in his pupils. He evolves the values of Name in his mind and then inculcates them in the pupil's life'

The Chandan like Guru is he, the
core of whose heart is imbued
with true Name,
And who maketh fragrant the whole
vegetation around him,
O, let us be attuned to the loving
feet of such a guru. *22

A true teacher is perfect in thought, word and deed. He is fully illumined. He has gained divine knowledge. He has perfected his powers of body, mind and soul. All his actions are based on charity, love and unselfishness. He is merciful. He is pious. In spite of possessing so many virtues, he is humble. He is free of contentment bearing flowers of righteous conduct and fruit of spiritual illumination. He is a man of high character, disciplined mind and body.

For his disciple, the guru is like father, mother, brother and comrade. He is friend, guide and philosopher. He is without enmity. All are equal before his eyes. He is compassionate and sympathetic.

O, there is no other pilgrim station, like the Guru,
For, the guru is the pool of contentment and compassion. *23

With his love and understanding he changes the life of his pupil. Guru Nanak's love flowed out to Lehna. And he became 'Angad', a 'limb' of the Master's body, an integral part of Nanak's radiant soul. Out of his love for his disciple (of course, taking in view the merit) Guru Nanak made him his successor and not any one of his own sons. This loving and sympathetic way of treating of the guru changed many a Sajjan Thugs and Kaura Rakshashas.

The Guru is a spiritual preceptor". He is a man helping his brothers, a child leading children, a light kindling other lights, an awakened soul awakening other souls, at highest a power of presence of the Divine calling to him other powers of the Divine. *24 He himself is perfect and leads his pupils to perfection. He is, in fact, suprapersonal because he is basically the context for the divine activity to be arrived out. He is the most important aspect of the environment for spiritual development. Professor Betty Heimann has likened the Indian Guru to 'Suprapersonal stepping stones to perfection.'*25

The guru of Guru Nanak's conception does not work for monetary gains. He is dedicated to his work disinterestedly. His work is his mission. The teacher who works only for amassing wealth is not a true teacher.

The ego centric selleth his knowledge,
And poison he earneth and eateth. *26

Guru Nanak decries those teachers who live on the aims and offerings of their disciples. " Do not fall at the feet of him who calls himself a Guru or Pir and goes begging." *27

A true teacher earns his living by the sweat of his brow and out of that he contributes something for the welfare of humanity. He ponders over the essence of knowledge and becomes the benefactor of humanity. He is not an ascetic but leads the practical life of a Karam Yogi. He is like an ancient rishi fully devoted to the cause of humanity.

But it is very difficult to be really a true teacher. The path of a true teacher is the path of sadhna, devotion and sacrifice. Generally, we are encircled by false teachers. The Guru has also described the traits of a false teacher and asked mankind to be cautious of him, says Guru Nanak:

"False is his speech and he usurps what is not his,
And yet he goes out to preach to others.
He who himself is beguiled
Will beguile his company too,
But such, Nanak today are the leaders of man." *28

A false teacher exploits others. He lives on the alms of his disciples. He sells knowledge. He does not devote his mind to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. So his mind is shallow. He

Is engaged in fruitless endeavours. Guru Nanak depicts the personality of such a teacher and asks mankind to beware of him.

“If the leaders be blind
How will he know the right way ?
His mind is shallow
And being deceived he will be misled,
If he walks not on the way
How will he reach the Lord’s mansion.
For he is blinded in the mind
One sees nothing, unaided by the Lord’s name,
And the blind one is engaged in his fruitless strife. *29

It is very essential to select a true teacher. The guru asks the disciple first to see the commodity and then trade in it. Otherwise the disciples who have an ignorant guru cannot secure a position of respect. *30 The teacher and pupil both are misled.

“The disciples play instruments the Gurus dance,
Shake their feet roll their heads
The dust keeps flying and falls on their hair,
And the people, seeing it laugh and go home,
It is for the sake of bread that they beat time,
And purposely fall on the ground.” *31

Equally important are Gururji’s views about the disciple, the learner. To be worthy of studentship and learning, a young man should possess certain special qualities and pass through a life of discipline and austerity.

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THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLE

To be educated rightly involves great effort on the part of the disciple. No intellectual, social, moral or spiritual development is possible without conscious endeavor on the part of the educand. This endeavor is possible only when one leads an ordered and disciplined life.

In our culture, there has always been an emphasis on so disciplining the life of the student that he is capable of concentrating exclusively all his energies upon education in order to seek his fullest development. The teacher has very often been imposing his will on the student providing him with full guidance and trying to develop him according to the standards and ideals cherished by him.

Recent developments in the field of psychology have brought into lime light greater respect for child's nature. The child is now no longer, taken to be mouldable matter in the hands of the teacher alone. The concept of discipline has accordingly undergone a great change. Educationists now recommend that an effort be made to help the child to discipline himself. Self discipline is thus considered to be more significant than the discipline from outside. Guru Nanak seems to follow the middle path. He does emphasize the role of the teacher in the life of the pupil. He does emphasize the obedience and fullest devotion for the teacher on the part of the pupil. But he also makes a strong appeal for awakening in the mind of the child a consciousness for making his own life better under self imposed discipline. He equally emphasizes the individual's own effort to cultivate desirable virtues in himself and sublimate the evil impulses by leading a disciplined life.

WHAT IS DISCIPLINE ?

Guru Nanak has attached great importance to discipline. "He alone loves God, whose mind is disciplined." *1 In Japji he says that discipline is the quality which breathes life in the process of building an enlightened personality.

According to Guru Nanak, the goal of life and education is union with God. This goal can be achieved with the help of 'Sadhana' or discipline. The way itself is meditation, with adoring love, upon divine qualities. The result is the cleansing and disciplining of the mind which leads to union with God. *2

Guru Nanak has used the words 'Hukam' (Divine ordinance), 'Sanjam' (Discipline), 'Bhau' (fear of God) and 'Santokh' (contentment, resignation to the will of God) for discipline. In the very first stanza of 'Japji' Guru Nanak points out very clearly that man's aim of life is to become a seer of truth by removing the veil of ego which stands between him and God. Man can be successful in this endeavor if he follows the 'Hukam' of the master.

“How shall then we know the truth ?
How shall we rend the veil of untruth away ?
Abide thou by His will (Hukam)
And make thine own His will,
O Nanak, thus is truth attained.” *3

To follow God’s ordinance (Hukam) is to set up spiritual discipline in life. Then only one can become seeker after truth. In Asa-di-war, Guru Nanak has given the characteristics of a disciplined man which can help us to form an idea of his concept of discipline.

“It is the man of discipline, indeed,
Who can serve the world properly,
It is the men of true discipline indeed,
Who contemplate God, the all Truth, Reality,
Who do not step on the wrong path,
Who practice religion through performance of noble deeds,
Who observe the path of moderation,
In the matter of food and drink,
Who dedicate themselves to God,
And they attain God the great,
Through evolution of the greatness of His name in life.”*4

The term ‘Sikh’ is a changed form of the word ‘Shish’ which literally means a disciple, and Sikhism is a disciplined creed, a discipline of the body, of the mind and of the soul. In other words Sikhism is disciplinism. 5 In simple words we can say that discipline is the training of the body, mind and soul, to act according to rules, orders and regulations. It means moderation, control, sublimation and balance in our thought, word, deed and desire. It is the root of all the virtues. Without it men become slaves of their wild desires.

This discipline of Gururji’s conception has got four aspects, physical, mental, moral and spiritual. Gradual and voluntary discipline of the mind and body will bring out the essential goodness inherent in the individual. Physical discipline consists in keeping the body healthy, neat and clean and keeping the senses under control.

“One controlling one’s senses is the master of true discipline.” *6

In mental discipline, Gururji emphasizes the conquest of the mind. Conquering the mind is the conquest of the world. *7 Self-purification love and devotion, concentration and meditation on God, association with holy people, service to mankind and good actions are essential for spiritual discipline.

The inculcation of discipline in life requires obedience to superior authority. The ideal of surrender and devotion is the basis of discipline. Submission to the will of God and Guru is essential.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISCIPLE

In Sidhgost, the yogis ask Guru Nanak, "Who is your Guru ? Whose disciple you are ?" Guru Nanak replies "The word (Shabad) is the Guru and the mind attuned to the Shabad' is the disciple." *8 In this dialogue we have the definition of both the Guru and the disciple. A true disciple is one who is fully attuned to the Guru's word. A disciple is one who follows the discipline of the Guru. A disciple of the Guru's conception has got the following qualities.

1. Fully Dedicated Soul

The disciple is a fully dedicated soul. He is a seeker after truth. He does not take things for granted. He verifies their truth in the real spirit of a researcher. He believes in the essence of religion and not in its outward trappings. He lives a worldly disciplined life. He has a strong sense of service for the Guru and the general mankind. He possesses fullest dedication and concentration. Guru Nanak says;

"The true disciple serves God
By dedicating his actions to him.
His life is imbued with the
Nectar of Name and Truth.
By reflecting on the Guru's word
The disciple has learnt this,
That it is through the Lord's grace
That one is ferried across.
Verily, the way of true disciple is
The way of Karam Yoga
Which is inspired by God's grace
The way surely takes him across the ocean of life
With the laurels of success, glory and honour.*9

2. Reverence For The Teacher

The disciple of the Guru's conception has great reverence for the teacher. He has implicit faith in the Guru, because he knows that love and devotion enlighten the mind. He places himself fully in the hands of the Guru because he knows that he will be able to achieve his aim of

education and develop his latent potentialities with his help only. For him Guru is a beacon light who shows him the right path. That is why he is ready to sacrifice himself for his Guru.

"I am a sacrifice to my Guru
A myriad times a day
Who made angels of men
And yea without delay."*10

3. Obedience To The Teacher And Unconditional Surrender

Tradition affirms that towards the close of his life, Guru Nanak began a systematic trial of his disciples, his object being to select someone worthy of Guruship after his death. These trials generally took the form of apparently unreasonable commands at unreasonable times by the Guru over those around him. Only Lehna came successful out of these ordeals as he obeyed him without questioning and hesitation. These trials show that the first and foremost quality a disciple of the Guru's conception should possess is implicit obedience and unconditional surrender to the Guru. Guru Nanak tried Lehna and found him pure like gold and altogether fit for the exalted office of the Guru.

"Between thee and me there is now no difference. None of my Sikhs hath such faith and confidence in me as thou and therefore I love thee most of all. Thou are verily Angad, a part of my body." *11 Such examples can be multiplied from the lives of successor Gurus, which show that according to the Sikh tradition, the sin-qua-non of eligibility to Guruship or in other words the essential requisite of an ideal disciple was implicit surrender to the Guru 'Sacrificium' intellectus as Trump would call it. *12 Guru Nanak has also expressed this idea in these words.

"If thou desires to play at love with me
Come my way with thy head in the palm of the hand,
Put thy feet on this road,
Give thy head and care not other's opinion."* 13

Absolute surrender to the Guru is one of the fundamental qualities of a disciple according to the Sikh Gurus. This devotion for the Guru on the part of the disciple conforms with Indian tradition. In ancient times, in the farewell address at the end of his education, the pupil was advised to serve his Guru like God. *14 He was advised to remain obedient to his teacher till his end. *15 Even in modern times Gandhi Ji advocates devotion (Gurubakhti). He felt that in the absence of education would be dissipated and the building of character difficult to achieve. *16

But this discipline of the Guru is not the discipline of a hard task master. This discipline of the Guru impressed upon his pupil is inspired by abundant love, compassion and understanding for the pupil. The motive behind is the enrichment and refinement of pupil's personality. And when the pupil's personality is fully developed, the Guru does not hesitate to hail the pupil as

the Guru.” He who undergoes the discipline is the true disciple. He is my master and I am his disciple.”

The Gurus preserved the ancient Indian tradition of the filial relationship between the teacher and the taught. The teacher was regarded as the spiritual father of his pupils. This mystical union between the teacher and the taught is quite unique in the history of our educational thought and practice.

4. Discipline Of Body, Mind And Spirit

The Gurus ask their disciples to discipline their physical, mental and spiritual faculties. The body is the gift of God and the disciple should keep it in a healthy condition by regular habits and good diet taken in moderation. He is not to torture it by keeping fasts and doing ascetic exercises. Smoking and use of intoxicants are prohibited.

“Avoid such foods which cause pain to the body
And passion in the mind.
Avoid such dresses which cause pain to the body
And passion in the mind.” *17

These disciplinary regulations act unceasingly as impersonal teachers. Such type of disciplinary practices have been in vogue in India since times immemorial. The pupil was trained to a simple life whether he was rich or poor and habits of discipline, reverence and self respect were included. Chastity was strictly enjoined. The period of studentship of the Brahmachari was regarded as a period of discipline in an ashram. *18

The disciple of the Guru’s conception is a seeker after truth. Ignorance is a spiritual bondage. The Gurus emphasize mental discipline through acquisition of knowledge. Guru Nanak gives three steps for the cultivation of knowledge. These three steps are suniya (hearing or listening), Manne (believing or accepting or thinking), Ek Dhyān (concentration, assimilation or synthesis). Complete knowledge can be attained only when the disciple first listens to the words of the Guru. Next he meditates and having reflected and meditated he assimilates the truth so gained.” *19

Mere intellectual development without the development of character, learning without piety, proficiency in the sacred lore with a deficiency in practice may pervert the very goal of studentship. Ethical conduct is the basis of spiritual life. Truth is high but higher still is truthful living. There can be no worship without good actions. According to Guru Nanak the mark of an educated person is that he contemplates upon the higher values of life. For moral and spiritual discipline. Guru Nanak wants his disciple to overcome evil impulses and vices like Kam (concupiscence). Krodh (anger), Lobh (covetousness), Moh (attachment) and Ahnkar (pride). These are called the thieves and burglars which continuously steal away all the merit. Lust, wrath and avarice is the three fold way to hell.

“Attachment leads to desire, desire to anger,
anger to delusion, delusion to confused memory
and confused memory to destruction of reason.” *20

For the mental and spiritual discipline of their disciples, the Gurus have laid down certain codes of conduct. In ‘Sidhgoshti’, Guru Nanak gives six simple points of code of conduct for building character and disciplining the mind of the disciple. The disciple should not falter on seeing the riches and beauty of other persons. He should observe temperance in food and sleep. He should eat little and sleep little. The hunger of mind should be satiated and it can be done only by disciplining the mind with name. Next the disciple should deal in truth and shun falsehood. He should seek the Guru’s grace in the form of holy word i.e Guru Shabad. He should lead life like a lotus flower or a duck which floats carefree in water. He should be a servant of humanity and share his earnings with the needy and the poor.

To be educated fully the educand must pass through the five grades of spiritual journey which are Dharam Khand (the realm of knowledge) Saram Khand (the realm of action or divine grace), Sach Khand (the realm of divine truth). *21 The disciple has to pass through these realms to become fully accomplished. It is the path of the knowledge, action and devotion all the three put together. This blend of Gyan (knowledge) Karam (action) and Bakhti (devotion) leads to balanced spiritual development. Then the disciple reaches the Ultimate, the abode of the Formless Lord and is united with Him. And it is condition of peace, of consummate joy and perfect tranquility, a condition transcending all human telling.

5. Daily Routine

For the fullest development of the personality of the disciple, Guru Nanak recommends a special daily routine that leads to a disciplined way of life. The disciple travelling on the road to perfection has to spend his way in the planned manner. He does not lead the life of an ascetic and undergo penances like the ancient Indian disciple. He participates actively in the daily activities of life. But this partaking has to be in a disciplined way. He is never unmindful of higher values of life. Guru Ram Dass lays down the daily routine of a disciple in these words:

“He who deems himself a Sikh of the true Guru
Should rise early morning and contemplate the name.
In the early hours of the morning he should rise and bathe.
And cleanse his soul in a tank of nectar
As he repeats the name the Guru taught him
Thus he washes away the sins of his soul,

Then at dawn he should sing the hymns of the Guru
And throughout all the busyness of the day.
He should hold in his heart the name.
He who repeats the Name with every breath
Such a Sikh is indeed dear to the Guru.
The Sikh that wins the favour of the Lord.
Has received the gift of the lord's name from the Guru
Nanak seeks to kiss the dust under the feet of such a Sikh.
Who utters the name and inspires others to do so. *22

Bhai Gurudas also enumerates the following daily activities of a disciple.

A disciple gets up early and takes bath. After reading Guru's words, he goes to Dharamsala. There he sits in the holy congregation and intently listens to Gurubani with a devout heart. He renders service to his fellow beings indiscriminately. He earns his livelihood in a righteous way and shares his food with others. He rather feeds others first but himself takes what is left over. At sunset he again attends to his prayers at the Dharamsala.*23 The same daily routine with recitation of Reharas in the evening and Kirtan Sohila at bed time is prescribed for a disciple in almost every Rahitnama or code of conduct. The disciple is thus given a simple and well planned schedule of activities.

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STRAINS OF MODERN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES IN GURU NANAK'S THOUGHTS

Strains of various modern philosophies in Guru Nanak's thought are found although it will be far from right to give any one single label to it. Essentially a man of God, he advocated love of God, devotion to Guru, the liberator, love and service of God's people, simple, pure, honest life of action and discipline.

The core of Guru Nanak's thought is humanism. Man is the centre of his concern. He seems to be an idealist in his aims, ideals and contents of education. He is pragmatic in his approach to life and naturalist in his love for nature. Like realists he believes that world is not an illusion. It is real like the real God.

HUMANISM AND GURU NANAK

"That which is characteristically human, not supernatural, that which belongs to man and not to external nature, that which raises man to his greatest satisfaction is apt to be called humanism." *1

Humanism is a philosophy of which man is the centre and sanction. It believes in Homo mensura man is the measure of all things. It emphasizes that proper study of mankind is man. The modern western humanism does not believe in supernatural or heavenly powers. The cosmos does not possess a supernatural or eternal God. Matter is self existent, self active and self developing.

Guru Nanak is a great humanist but his humanism is some what different from the modern conception as he fully believes in God. For him humanism is to see God in man and respect Him in all humility and reverence. His humanism is based on unity of Godhead, cosmopolitan spirit and universal out look. Writing about Guru Nanak's humanism, Gurumukh Nihal Singh says;

Guru Nanak was a great humanist and his outlook was wholly universal. There was no room for any parochialism or sectionalism in his life, thinking or practice. He travelled far and wide, both within and outside India. Wherever he went he claimed all persons he met as his own kith and kin. All were equal in his eyes. *2

All men are great and high. None of them is low. Because one God alone has created their personalities. And one alone pervades them all. *3

For him the mark of a great man is.

He alone is the greatest yogi,
who is comrade of man,
God and Nature.*4

Humanism means simply human beingism, that is devotion to the interest of human beings, wherever they live and whatever their status.....Humanism cannot tolerate discrimination against any people or nation as such. Current humanism reaffirms the spirit of cosmopolitanism, of international friendship and the essential brotherhood of man. *5

Guru Nanak's humanism is in full agreement with this definition of Lamont. His philosophy is of joyous service of the greatest good of all humanity. He believes in he prayeth best who loveth best. He himself devoted his whole life practically to the service of suffering humanity. The foundation stone of his philosophy is service of mankind. He is cosmopolitan in his outlook and to establish ties of friendship among various countries, he travelled far and wide to far off countries like Tibet, Afghanistan, China, Turkey, Egypt, Ceylon etc.

As a humanist, Guru Nanak believes that man has the potentialities to solve his own problems, through reason, judgment and action. He can carve out his own destiny through his own efforts. For Dr. Tirlochan Singh, Guru Nanak was a great humanist as he roused the people to a sense of dignity of man as the creative genius behind world history and builder of human destiny, culture and civilization. *6

As a humanist he fought against injustice and cruelty all through his life need no mention here. Human and humane are his watch words. At the time of Baber's invasion he even challenged God who did not take pity on suffering Indians.

Humanism stands for universal education to develop all the powers of man. As a humanist Guru Nanak carried on this literary drive to free the people of his country men from the chains of ignorance. Whenever he went he opened Gurudawaras to which elementary schools were attached. The gates of these schools were thrown open to all, rich and poor, men and women. In those days of purdah system he advocated women to be respected and educated. Humanistic respect of the child's personality is found in his system of education. The teacher of his conception has got unbound love and compassion for the child. He pays individual attention to him to develop his personality in the fullest possible manner.

Humanism wants all round development of child's personality. In Guru Nanak's conception of education we find the same emphasis to develop body, mind and soul of the child. His education is definitely not one sided.

IDEALISM AND GURU NANAK

Idealism attaches more importance to spiritual and mental side of man than material. For it human personality is of supreme value and constitutes the noblest work of God. Idealists believe that culture, art morality and religion lead us to the art of reality and therefore education must be religious moral, intellectual and aesthetic. For them aim of education is self realization and exaltation of human personality. There are eternal ideas of truth, beauty and goodness which should be inculcated in life to lead a glorious life.

If Guru Nanak's philosophy of education is examined in the light of above principles, it is not difficult to find that he is an idealist to the core. Idealism is deeply ingrained in his nature. His aims of education, content of education, role of the Guru all are based on idealistic pattern.

Self realization is the main aim of education according to idealism. With idealism end of life is to acquire an inner relation with the infinite. Guru Nanak is in agreement with Horne who says, "Education is the eternal process of superior adjustment of physically and mentally developed, free conscious, human beings to God, as manifested in the intellectual, emotional and volitional environment of men." *7 For Guru Nanak self realization and self manifestation is the ultimate aim of education. God is the ultimate haven of man. Spiritual spark is already in man. It is to be enkindled. God is the highest ideal which a man should put before him to realize.

"God is one, Absolute Reality,
He is Onkar, the very embodiment
of life, knowledge and joy, Truth
and Name.....
So he must be meditated upon for
life's perfection. O, aspirant after yoga." *8

For Guru Nanak an educated man, scholar or seer is one who puts the garland of Ram Nam round his neck and realizes himself. Education is fruitless if it does not lead to God realization. The supreme aim of education, according to Guru Ji is to awaken the sense of divinity within and completely identify oneself with the universal spirit.

Another aim of idealistic education is exaltation of human personality. The human personality is the palatial temple of God. So his personality must be exalted and elevated fully through evolution of body, mind and soul. Although Guru Nanak emphasizes the spiritual development of the man mainly but he does not ignore his mental and bodily development. He wants him to gain more and more knowledge to free himself from the bondage of ignorance. In his content,

emphasis on the development of body is also found. So like other idealists he also seeks to produce a harmoniously balanced personality through education.

Idealism attaches great importance to development of character and inculcation of eternal values in life. In Guru Nanak's education great emphasis is laid upon character development. In his Japji, he tells us how with the development of various virtues like purity, truth, beauty, goodness, discipline, honesty, good personality can be built. Gurmukh is the ideal man of his conception who is pure in words, deeds and thoughts. *9

Another feature of his education which brings him in line with idealists is his emphasis upon religion in his content of education. Like idealists, his main emphasis is upon humanities in education, Religion, language, literature, music, history and culture form the main body of his curriculum.

Like idealists, Guru Nanak attaches great importance to the role of the teacher. To show the right path to the pupil, teacher is of utmost importance. It is only perfect teacher who can transform the personality of the child, who can change dross into gold. He is the true enlightener, the true beacon light.

In Guru Nanak we find the same love for disciplined life like idealists. Although he respects the personality of the child but he wants him to evolve discipline in his life to get the true salvation of life.

PRAGMATISM AND GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak is not an arm chair theorist. He is pragmatic in his outlook and behavior. The word pragmatic has its origin in the Greek word pragma which means action and activity. According to Willaim James;

"He (Pragmatic) turns away from abstruaction and insufficiency from verbal solutions, from had a priori reasons, from fixed principles closed systems and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts towards action and towards power. *10

Guru Nanak though an idealist, led a life of pragmatist. He believes in the philosophy of right action of Gita. But he is of opinion that the right action which can spiritualize the destiny of an individual and society is ever based on wisdom and devotion. He is pragmatic with a difference as he combines action with the grace and will of God. That is why he emphasizes that a man cannot become pragmatic in his attitude of life unless he is cheerfully and creatively resigned to the will of God.

Like modern pragmatists Guru Nanak also emphasizes learning by doing, self help and dignity of labour. He believes that a disciple, or a student or a child should make himself great and even

perfect by self help and self guidance. He was a man of practical experiences of spiritualism and he says quite frankly that one should gain experience of truth and name through his self efforts and then he should make one's destiny approvable in the eyes of God through his self guidance and self exertions." 11 He is of the opinion that wiseman is he indeed who is led by his own "Sujh' and 'Bujh' that is enlightenment and realization.

"Right enlightenment can grow in life as a matter of course only, if inspired by right action. It is a fact indeed that a man devoid of right action goes on degenerating himself into ignorance and folly." *12

Pragmatism wants the child to acquire for himself the knowledge and skills necessary to deal effectively with the situations of real life. Education is not so much teaching the child, as encouraging him to learn for himself through experimental, creative activity. Guru Nanak's pragmatic approach to education can be seen from the fact that like a pragmatist he wants the child to develop heuristic attitude in himself. To acquire real knowledge, One should be a seeker after truth. For him wisdom can be realized only through a life of action and investigation.

Wisdom cannot be sought through mere prattle,
To describe its essence is also hard,
Verily, those alone can gain wisdom,
who through God's grace,
lead the very practical life of Karma Yoga. *13

We find the tinge of modern pragmatism in the following lines of the Guru also;

A person of real research
becomes a creative one,
But a talkative one who indulges in mere prattle,
Destroys himself. *14

"Truth is made just as health, wealth and strength are made, in the course of experience." 15 But unlike the modern pragmatists Guru Nanak believes that truth is unchangeable and eternal but try however we may we cannot grasp the truth completely because God himself is the truth. But he agrees with the modern pragmatists that every day truth changes with the lapse of time. Truth is that which works. Good practices are liable to degenerate into dogmas, and rituals with lapse of time. He is contemptuous of these rituals dogmas, rites and ceremonies. And wants the student to discern the real truth and discard these practices which degenerate with the lapse of time.

Like modern pragmatists Guru Nanak also does not believe in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. He does not want narrow scholars but practical citizens. He wants to develop

thinking rational and practical minds. He wants education that helps in day to day life. He says to the scholar that he may read thousand and thousand of books and stuff his brain with their information but he cannot make his destiny achieve self fulfillment unless he realizes practically the knowledge he has gained and believes practically in the philosophy of God and motherhood of nature. *16

At the same place he says that only that much knowledge should be acquired which is required by one to lead a successful life. Otherwise too much knowledge becomes a source of worry if it is not practically realized.

The more you write and study
without practical realization of knowledge,
The more you worry yourself. *17

In short Guru Nanak's pragmatism is name centered and is coupled with grace and will of God. From the spiritual point of view it can surely make the destinies of individuals and societies cheerfully sublime and delightfully creative.

GURU NANAK AND NATURALISM

It (Naturalism) always comes on the scene as a protest against well established systems that have become stereotyped, always it pleads for greater simplicity, always it seeks to banish sophistication by sweeping away paraphernalia. Its watch word is back to nature and his fighting adjective is artificial. Viewed in this light Guru Nanak is a great naturalist as he refutes the well established, stereotyped customs, systems, rituals, pedantry, ceremonies and rites which had degenerated and smacked of artificialities and dogmas. He asks the Mulahs and Pandits to rise above castes and creeds and to see God in every man. * 18

Naturalism for Guru Nanak is a philosophy of life, a way of living and a creed of spiritual growth. By nature he means the temperament or Dharma of God. In a second sense, he takes nature as God's manifestation of the universe. In a third sense he takes nature as the collection of certain natural principles, the observance of which makes the life of a man spontaneous and divine. There is a very nice description of nature given by Guru Nanak in Japji in four stanzas viz. 16, 17, 18, 19. *19

In the 16th stanza he says the nature is unlimited in its expanse, its power of sustenance is Dharma of God. It consists of limitless energies and beauties. In the next stanza he says that all powers of meditation, love, worship, austerity, divine wisdom, charity, sacrifice are being inspired by nature alone and they are leading human beings towards God realization.

In the 18th stanza he says that all negative forces folly, ignorance, theft unlawful livelihood, cruel government, slaughter, sin, crime, fault are also the production of God's nature and they

are necessary for the evolution of opposites in the world. In the next stanza he says that there are elements of life. From the immanent indwelling spirit in the nature have emerged books of wisdom, history, science and divine knowledge. Thus it is through the grasp of these educational elements in nature that we get the following advantages;

That we evolve name and its praises in life,
That we get hold of wisdom, music and art of life,
That we use the language of writing and speaking,
And that we express our pre ordained
destiny of life in noble deeds. *20

At the end of each stanza, the Guru says that God's nature is wonderful in its wisdom and enlightenment. It is expression of God's will and name. Formless God resides in it. Thus like his humanism, his naturalism is also coupled with spiritualism. So nature must be appreciated continually to make the individual and collective life happy and blissful.

But the most wonderful song of Guru Nanak about nature is given in Asa-di-war. In this song, three most important things are worthy of being noticed. First, the nature is the very life and self of God, second that it is all life (Sarab Akar), all love (Sarab piar) and all wisdom (Sarab Vichar). 21 According to him the observance of the nature's laws and discipline is the very essence of human happiness. The whole universe is the very expression of God's Hukum and he is exercising it most skillfully for self fulfillment and self enjoyment.

Guru Nanak calls God also by the name of beloved child (Bala Pritam). This conception of the Guru is very important from the educational point of view. It takes us close to Wordsworthian glory of the child. He means to say that God should be seen in the child and his personality duly respected, loved and appreciated and enlightened. He should form the centre of educational pivot as God forms the centre of our life. Our lives revolve round God, so the whole curriculum and methods of teaching should revolve round the personality of the child. Thus Guru Nanak comes nearer to the Paidocentric education of the child.

Realism believes that this world is real. It is not a faint reflection of some archetypal reality. The realist calls us back from the idealistic world of subjective transcendental speculation into a world of reality, truth and value grounded in what actually is.

Guru Nanak does not agree with those Indian Vedantists, who believe that God is real but this world is illusion. He believes that this world is also real, like the real God. The world is the Abode of true God the true God dwells in it. So how it can be unreal and false. He believes in the world of here and now. That is why aim of life, according to him is not to attain salvation but to develop best in man and to make this world a veritable heaven. He seems to say, "I have not brought the message of any heaven on the earth, I have come to convert this world into a

veritable heaven.” That is why Dr. Tirlochan Singh is of the view that social realism is found in Guru Ji. *22

Guru Nanak is against escapism. During his times thousands of Yogis and sidhas had renounced the world, impressed with the nothingness of this life. They thought renunciation as the highest virtue and looked down upon power and prosperity. Guru Nanak changed all this. He put the seal of his sanction and approval on all the worldly pursuits provided they were not indulged in at the cost of righteousness and truth. For him life is something noble to be enjoyed, appreciated, lived and developed fully. He is of opinion that;

We can learn the art of yoga only
when we live in the world of materialism
but are dedicated to immaculate God. *23

That is why in Sidh Ghost he criticizes the Sidhas for not discharging their duties of life and taking refuge in renunciation.

Guru Nanak was well acquainted with the realities of life. Shortcomings and draw backs of those times were known to him. He roused the sleeping nation with his clarion call of action and devotion. He travelled far and wide (which is given great importance in realism), to give people message of real life and real religion. He wanted practical spiritual people, who worked like peasants and thought like philosophers. He wanted practical men of affairs having pragmatic utilitarian view of life. And it was the influence of this philosophy of Guru Nanak that Punjabis became practical people having realistic down to earth ideology, of course mingled with asceticism.

Thus a careful study of Guru Nanak’s educational philosophy demonstrates that humanism, pragmatism, naturalism and realism are complementary rather than contradictory. In his philosophy of education, humanism and idealism being fundamental and pragmatism, naturalism and realism being merely contributory, his educational philosophy is humanistic in its basis as it works for the welfare of whole humanity, idealistic in its aims and ideals and pragmatic in the method and programme of work. It is naturalistic as it believes in the inspirational power of nature for acquiring education. His realism prepares the man for world of affairs. Thus to emphasize one aspect of his philosophy to the neglect of the others is to see the part and identity it with the whole. The real greatness of Guru Nanak lies in the fact that the dominant tendencies of humanism, idealism, pragmatism etc. are not separate and independent in his philosophy, but they fuse into a unity, giving rise to a theory of education which would suit the needs of the day and satisfy the loftiest aspirations of the human soul.

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RELEVANCE OF GURU NANAK'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY FOR OUR TIMES

The educational thinking of Guru Nanak Dev Ji has an element of abiding universal truth. Not only was it relevant when the Guru expressed his thoughts first but it has also meaning and significance for our times.

We are caught up in a social maelstrom. There is crisis of values. Exploitation in the name of religion, terrorism, lack of patriotism, casteism, social apathy, self aggrandizement, economic disparities, and corruption are just a few among the many social evils that afflict us to day. Educational institutions which should normally promote social progress and help bring about a just social order have been fallen a prey to the manipulations of the promoters of injustice, hatred and bondage of human spirit.

The educational ideas of the Guru are as fresh and life giving as ever. The concept, programme and methodology of education envisaged by the Guru has a relevance for us. We can lessen the severity of our troubled times to a larger extent if we care to interpret the educational thinking of the Guru correctly and learn from him as to how to direct our educational course.

RELIGION IN EDUCATION

According to Guru Ji life without God realization is barren, but God realization is possible when one's life is guided and inspired by religion.

Like the ancient rishis, Guru Nanak does not separate education from religion. A truly educated person is a religious person, pure in thoughts, words and deeds and vice versa. These days, the separation of education from religion has brought about a crisis of values, not only in the field of education but also in the other spheres of human activities. In the name of secularism, people should have grown allergic to religion is rather surprising.

Education devoid of purpose leads to frustration and unhappiness. We are daily witnessing this phenomena in our country. In order to make education a living force in the life of the individual, it is necessary to provide it moral and spiritual base. Viewed in this context, Guru Nanak's philosophy of education based upon deep religious foundations is of great significance to us in our present situation.

In the modern world man is fast heading towards materialism. He has become worshiper of mammon. For money he may stoop down to anything, bribery, exploitation, theft, deception and adulteration of food even. The number of Malik Bhagos is daily on the increase. There is a danger that in this pursuit of wealth and industrialization, we may neglect the spiritual values of life. The materialistic standards of values, the worship of wealth and power has to be replaced by a new set of values by spiritual balance and higher ideals.

Loss of moral values, character and discipline on the part of our students has not escaped the attention of our educationists also. The committee on religious and moral instruction, appointed by the Government of India, in 1964 impresses upon all the desirability of providing religious and moral education in all educational institutions. The committee does not favour the view that religious education be entirely left to the home and community.

In the home, the rituals and outward forms of religions are usually emphasized and the young folk in such an atmosphere saturated with such ceremonials are bound to attach too much importance to this aspect of religion to the neglect of ethical teachings and spiritual values. *1

The committee is of the view that if the content of education is enriched with moral and spiritual values, the purpose of education will have been very truly fulfilled. *2

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) recommends in a very forceful language that educational system should emphasize the development of fundamental social, moral and spiritual values. *3

EDUCATION BASED ON HUMANISM

The modern world is in the grip of narrow sectarianism, regionalism and fanaticism. Narrow loyalties have created disunity. Conflicts and wars entangle the world. Powerful nations threaten the weak ones.

Education is a great unifying force. Education based on humanistic values can certainly change the shape of things. The essence of Guru Nanak's philosophy is his humanism. Man is the noblest work of God. He himself is abiding in man. To see God in man is the greatest virtue. Man's personality should be fully evolved to make this world a happy place to live in.

The education of Guru Nanak's conception is based on cosmopolitan outlook, brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. There is no room for sectarian outlook, caste, creed or even sex in his educational system. It is based on love, respect and mutual understanding. The teacher of his conception understands the child and the child respects the teacher with the fullest devotion at his command. Harmonious development of child is aimed at. Values of honesty, goodness and service are inculcated in all. The child is taught to earn his livelihood through creative honest labour and out of that contribute something to the common welfare.

Ignorance is a spiritual bondage. So doors of his educational system are open to all. He advocated education for all.

Those people who are devoid of knowledge,
fall on easy victim to deception of life
and are eaten up by the God of death. *4

PURPOSEFUL AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION

In the modern world emphasis is being laid on purposeful and functional education. In Guru Nanak we find the same trend although it is often for a different setting. He is opposed to bookish and theoretical education that does not challenge all the faculties of the child. He stands for enriched programme of education that leads to balanced development of human personality.

We may read and read books;
And fill carts with their loads,
We may read and read books,
And store caravans upon caravans with their loads,
We may read and read books,
And stuff boats, hollows and caravans with their burdens,
We may read and read books,
Through all the years and months at our command,
We may read and read books
Through out the life and with all the breaths at our disposal
yet says Nanak,
That all our education will be a mere prattle of ego,
Unless we realize the philosophy of unity of Godhead through it.
to make our destiny divine. *5

education that enkindles the spark for quest in the child, provokes his thinking, sharpens his imagination and makes him a socially useful person is the right education.

A person of real research
becomes a creative man,
But a talkative one who
indulges in mere prattle,
Destroys himself.* 6

For Guru Ji true wisdom can be realized only through a life of action:

Wisdom cannot be sought through prattle,
To describe its essence is also hard,
Verily those alone can gain wisdom,
who through God's grace,
Lead the very modern he appears in his approach.

DEDICATED TEACHER AND DEVOTED PUPIL

Guru Nanak offers a sublime concept of teacher, interested in his service. Education is a part of the religious duty with the teacher. Without caring for rewards and returns he makes honest endeavours for the betterment of his pupil and eventually there comes a stage when he finds the Guru in the pupil.

It is true that the present day teacher works in a situation which is altogether different. He is a member of a huge organization, being pressurized by social, economic and political forces. He stands hemmed in by those forces and is very often not in a position to do what he wants to do. But the truth is that he will not experience joy unless he is a person deeply interested in his role. Guru Nanak decries those teachers who live on the alms and offerings of their disciples. Do not fall at the feet of him who calls himself a Guru or pir and goes begging. The Guru Nanak's conception does not work for monetary gains. He is dedicated to his work disinterestedly. His work is his mission. All his actions are based on charity love and unselfishness. The teacher who works only for amassing wealth is not a true teacher. The ego centric selleth his knowledge and poison he earneth and eateh. A true teacher earns living by the sweat of his brow and out of that contributes something for the welfare of humanity. He ponders over the essence of knowledge and becomes the benefactor of humanity. He is not an ascetic but leads the practical life of a karamyogi. He is like an ancient rishi fully devoted to the cause of humanity. Thus Guru Nanak's concept of the teacher is elevating and inspiring even for the instructors of today who are becoming worshipper of mammon and are forgetting their duty towards the society.

No less worthy is the example of the pupil. The present day students asks for more freedom. But if freedom is not coupled with devotion to teacher, humility in learning, hard work, simple and pure living, it will do more harm than good. The qualities of pupil outlined by Guru Nanak must certainly make the present day pupil an ideal scholar and a devoted seeker after truth.

His concept of disciples based on freedom and self endeavor on the one hand, devotion, obedience and reverence for the teachers and parents on the other hand, can certainly serve as a guideline for the modern undisciplined youth. His concept of discipline based upon self restraint leads to personal as well social salvation.

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

True to the ancient seers of the country, Guru Nanak believes that the school is to work for the upliftment of the society as a part of its religious duty. And the society is bound by dharma to promote education. This reciprocity is unfortunately not being fully appreciated and recognized in our country. Education will play its vital role of building the nation if we could just listen to the sane advice of Guru Nanak that true purpose of education is achieved by him alone who works for the good of other people.

If one dwells on (the essence of) knowledge,
One becometh a benefactor of all. *8

In these lines Guru Nanak has laid down service of humanity as the chief characteristic of an educated man. The idea of come to learn and go to serve is imbibed in these lines. These words of Guru are unique in the history of educational thought and practice. This saying has been adopted as a motto by National Service Scheme all over India.

The Guru holds that man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow men and betterment of society. Man should earn his livelihood by honest labour and contribute something out of that for the needy and social reconstruction.

Those who earn their livelihood
By the sweat of their brow,
And give something out of that to the needy
Recognize the true path. *9

The Guru is against amassing of wealth and exploitation of poor on the part of rich. The story of Bhai Lalo and Malik Bhago shows that anything obtained undeservedly is not worth having. Since the Guru believes in the service of man and society, education of his conception should promote spirit of service, social sensitiveness, co-operation and sacrifice. Guru Nanak says emphatically.

We can get an honourable seat in the court of God.
Only when we practice disinterested service in the world.
And thus win glory, beauty and joy of life. *10

This ideal of social service can prove a boon for modern selfishness, self-centered and materialistic society. The prevailing system of education can be put on a more satisfactory and sounder foundations if it has roots in India's cultural and spiritual heritage. The spirit of Indian civilization and culture which has been developed through the ages can serve as a beacon light to the modern Indian youth who is fast heading towards western civilization. He is trying to

copy their dress, language and ways of living. Sometimes dazzled by the spectacular scientific achievements of the west, he seeks to adopt the western ways of life in the mistaken belief that the ways of dress and imitation of their language will make him modern and launch him on the road to progress.

For social reconstruction and national regeneration, the Guru has advocated a system of education based on fundamental principles of Indian religion; culture, history and ancient literature. He had abiding faith in the inherent strength of Indian culture. He stood for the revival of our great cultural heritage. He was well acquainted with the cultural traditions of India. All the Janam Sakhis are unanimous on stating that Guru Nanak sought the company of religious men well versed in the Indian religious literature of the age to become acquainted with the latest teaching of Indian philosophers and reformers. *11 He lamented to see the indiscriminate imitation of the muslim modes of living by his countrymen in his time. He condemned the adoption of foreign culture and language by the people.

“The Kashatriyas have given up their real dharma,
They have adopted the language (Culture) of the I
ill intentioned foreign rulers.” *12

He has pained to see that people had changed their tongue and preferred to be greeted in the muslim fashion.”

They (Hindus) have all assumed the muslim garb. Even the language of God has changed
The people are addressing one another as Mian Mian everywhere.” *13

The Guru favoured mother tongue as the medium of instruction. To take education to the doors of the masses, education through mother tongue is very essential. Even the modern educationists and psychologists feel that learning on the part of child becomes easier and faster through his own tongue.

EDUCATION FOR SECULARISM & NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Education has Secularism and National Integration is the demand of the day. India is a land of diverse cultures, religions, races and communities. Unless and until there are strong bonds of love and understanding to bind them together they will go on quarrelling and fighting in the name of religion, language, caste and creed. To bring about unity in diversity is the crying need of present day India. Educational philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji based on humanism, love, tolerance, brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God can go a long way in bringing about communal harmony and national integration. He took various steps to bring about national solidarity, social emotional, cultural and national integration, which are helpful even in the present context.

Guru Nanak was not against any religion. He asked the Hindus to become good Hindus and the Muslims to become good Muslims. When he said there is no Hindu no Musalman, he stood for a secular religion based on peaceful co-existence. The Guru tried to bridge the gulf between different castes and creeds. Guru will not ask men said Nanak, of what race and religion you are ? He would but ask him what have you done ? True religion does not consist in external practices but in the inward discipline of love, faith, mercy and humility expressed in righteous and compassionate deeds. Mardana, a muslim was a life long comanion of Guru Nanak. This ideology of secularism of Guru Nanak was further carried on by the succeeding Sikh Gurus, "The temple and the mosque are the same. The Hindu worship and the muslim prayer are the same. All men are the same. It is through error that they appear different. "Allah and Abhekh are the same. The Puran and Quaran are the same. They are all alike. It is God who creates all," emphasized Guru Gobind Singh.

All men are great, none of them is low,
There is one light of Absolute God alone which pervades all. *14

To remove the barriers of caste and creed, high and low, rich and poor, the Guru started the institution of sangat (Sitting together and singing praises of God) Pangat (community dining). At the initiation ceremony, Guru Gobind Singh made all the five Sikhs belonging to different castes and different provinces to drink nectar from the same bowl. Each Sikh of the Guru was a Bhai, the brother of all. They all were the sons of the same father, the supreme power God. Guru Nanak upheld the cause of down trodden and lower classes. He preferred to dine with Lalo, a low caste Hindu than to dine with Bhago a high caste rich man.

Now-a-days inter-state, inter-province educational tours are being emphasized to bring about better understanding co-existence and national understanding. Guru Nanak travelled extensively through the whole of India and the neighbouring countries to bring about better understanding, goodwill and ties of friendship among the people belonging to different regions. "Wearing a peculiar garb, a combination of the dress of the Hindu Sadhu and of the Muslim fakir, Guru Nanak made an extensive tour to all the famous Hindu and Muslim places of pilgrimage, going far to the east to Assam and Bengal, to the south into Konkan and Malabar and to the west upto Baghdad and Mecca. Everywhere he had one message, the unity of all religions and the futility of ceremonial worship." *15

Guru Nanak was a great nationalist and patriot. At the time of Babar's invasion of India, his heart cried in anguish when he saw the people being tortured by Babar and his troopers. "Who like a ravenous lion fell upon a herd of cows." "It was death disguised as a Muhgal who made war on us." There was a general massacre of people and hoses, mansions and places were burnt. Even the women were not spared. The Guru raised his voice against the tyranny and oppression of those times. In agony Guru Nanak addressed God.

"Thou hath sent yama disguised as the great Mughal Babar,

Terrible were the slaughter,
Loud were the cries of the lamenters,
Did this not awaken pity in thou Lord ?”*16

This spirit of national fervor of Guru Nanak was further enkindled with greater vigour and strength by Guru Gobind Singh. The Hindus who were so cowed down by foreign invaders that they could not raise their little finger against their atrocities, became fearless soldiers ready to sacrifice their all for the protection and glory of their motherland. He roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty longing for social freedom and national ascendancy. They were filled with new courage and hope to fight against the heavy odds of life.

Thus, we see that the Guru's educational philosophy has got much to contribute in our present situation. Guru Nanak essentially stands by values of life this country has cherished and prized through the ages. We shall continue to suffer from chaos in education and turmoil in our social and political life as long as we do not whole heartedly promote these values in our educational institutions. The Guru's emphasis on secular education, social service, group work, practical activities and action oriented education shows he was very much conscious of changing times and practicalities of life. This emphasis we shall ignore at our peril. In short whether it is his concept of education or programme of education or its execution or the role of the teacher it has deep meaning and significance for us. Our modern sophistications notwithstanding.

The fact that the Guru presented his ideas on education in simple way and did not present a systematically formulated philosophy of education should not make us septic in any way. He worked for the regeneration of people and education was rightly one very important means with him.

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